Mongol Presence in Northern Hindustan under the Delhi Sultanate

INDIA: THE UNREQUITED MONGOL EMPIRE

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Contents

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Delhi Sultanate[1]

Aybak Qutb al-Dîn	1206-1210
Ârâm Shâh	1210-1211
Iltutmysh Shams ad Dîn	Sultân of Delhi, 1211-1236
Fîrûz Shâh I	1236
Razziya Begum	Sultâna, 1236-1240
Bahrâm Shâh	1240-1242
Mas'ûd Shâh	1242-1246
Mahmud Shâh I	1246-1266
Balban	Viceroy since 1246
	1266-1287
Kayqubad	1287-1290
Khaljîs	
Jalal al-Din	1290-1296
Ala al-Din	1296-1316

Table 1.

[1] Kelly, L Ross PhD. 'Emperors of the Sangoku, The "Three Kingdoms": of India, China and Japan'. 1998. <http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.friesian.com/history/qin.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.friesian.com/sangoku.htm&h=1890&w=308&sz=21&hl=en&start=9&um=1&usg=__2-A6EgIH1ktuxEavQJha0RCivC0=&tbnid=1-XFTFQ4C1pMyM:&tbnh=150&tbnw=24&prev=/images%3Fq%3Ddelhi%2Bsultanate%2Bgenealogy%2Btable%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4SKPB_enGB239GB239>.29 August 2008.

The Mongol World Empire[2]

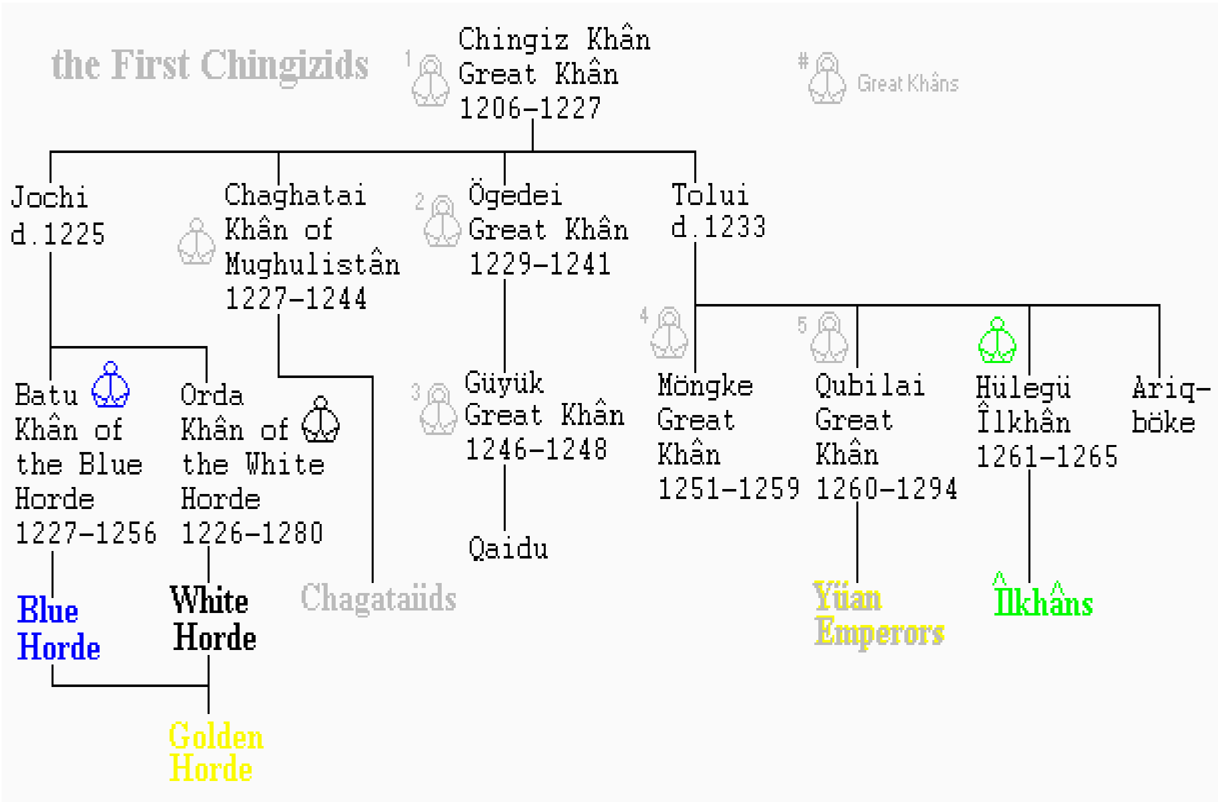


Table 2

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[2] Kelly, L. Ross PhD. The Mongol Khans. 2005. http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.friesian.com/history/mongol-1.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.friesian.com/mongol.htm&h=325&w=610&sz=8&hl=en&start=182&um=1&usg=__Shje9rBDmuZfum3JSUB0LpEh_dQ=&tbnid=BaIcwhgggamB6M:&tbnh=72&tbnw=136&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dcentral%2Basian%2Bmongols%26start%3D180%26ndsp%3D18%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4SKPB_enGB239GB239%26sa%3DN. 29 August 2008.

Introduction

In the 13th-14th centuries the Mongols were at the peak of their power and Mongol supremacy over most of the globe from China in the east to Russia in the west was unrivalled. Whether Russia or Northern China, Korea, Samarkand and Bukhara, or the powerful seat of the Islamic Caliphate, Baghdad, they were all under the control of the Mongols in the 13th century. Astonishingly, Hindustan remained an independent entity in the period, which by all means can only be remembered as the century of the Mongols. Significantly the rulers of Hindustan, the Delhi Sultanate, who repeatedly came into contact with the Mongols, proved to be an unrequited part of the Mongol World Empire. Hindustan shared a border with the Mongols for the whole of its existence and was by no means immune to the threat of the Mongols. The Mongol World Empire is etched in all the works of the historians of Hindustan in the 13th and 14th centuries. The Sultans of Delhi in large part shaped their military policies and political ambitions within Hindustan in response to the degree of Mongol threat that they perceived at any given time.[3] The Delhi Sultanate experienced the Mongols in a variety of ways, signalled by the arrival of Chinggis Khan himself in 1221 to give battle to the Khwarezm Shah,[4] troops build-up on Hindustan's borderlands in the reign of Ogedei,[5] seizure of Punjab and Kashmir under Mongke and Hulegu,[6] Mongol immigrants into the Delhi Sultanate after 1260 and in 1292,[7] active combat with the descendants of Hulegu (Ilkhans),[8] Chaghatai and Ogedei (Central Asian Mongols),[9] continuous trade with all the Mongol *uluses*, and religious exchanges. Moreover the Delhi Sultans were successful in keeping the Mongols at bay and were also involved in a continuous struggle with the Hindu Kingdoms of Hindustan which at the turn of the 14th century came under nominal control of the Delhi Sultanate.[10]

This work provides an overview of these exchanges and contacts between the Mongols and Hindustan, but more specifically focuses on the Chaghatai invasions of the late 13th century, and the neo-Muslim Mongols who were part of the fabric of the

[3] Nizami, 2002, pp. 322, 330, 331.
[4] Rashid al-Din, 1994, p.577.
[5] Ibid., p.975.
[6] Wink 2001, pp. 200-201.
[7] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 219.
[8] Ibid., p. 219.
[9] Ibid., pp. 250-260, 272, 301, 320.
[10] Ibid., pp. 251, 252, 254, 299.

highest echelons of the Delhi court and military from the 1260s onwards. I have chosen these two aspects to emphasise the intensive pressure on the Delhi Sultanate by the Mongols, especially in the reign of Ala al-Din Khalji (1296-1316). Ala al-Din's reign did not signify an end to the constant threat that the spectre of Mongol World dominance represented but did result in setbacks to the ambitious plans of the Central Asian Mongols and thus broke the myth of Mongol invincibility. Ala al-Din also thwarted Mongol efforts through the neo-Muslims inside Delhi who had been flexing their muscles in the succession struggles of the Delhi Sultanate. The neo-Muslims provide an exclusive moment of a Hindu-Muslim alliance against the Delhi Sultanate in the form of the neo-Muslims joining with the Rajputs.[11] Even though the alliance was a failure it lends itself to a dialogue with regards to the traditional language used for the competition between the Rajputs and the Delhi Sultanate which is expressed in terms of Hindu-Muslim rivalry.

The thesis has been divided into four parts. Chapter one describes the contemporary historians of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mongols (Ilkhans) and looks at the recorded history of the time. As far as possible it supplies references for the events which they illuminate. I have also included a short note on modern historiography with regards to the Delhi Sultanate and the Mongols. Chapter two gives an overview of the creation and a brief history of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mongol World Empire. I have also supplied information on the Rajputs which help make the case for various themes in the thesis, for instance, the Hindu-Mongol alliance and neo-Muslim Mongol identity. A section on the Mamluks offers itself to comparisons between the Ilkhan-Mamluk wars[12] and those fought between the Central Asian Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate. It also highlights similarities with regards to Mongol immigration to the Mamluk and Delhi Sultanates after the 1260s.[13] The main thrust of the thesis is in chapter three and four. Chapter three focuses on the intensified period of military campaigns against Hindustan by the Central Asian Mongols in 1290s. There is an attempt to understand the reasons for the defeat of the Mongols against the military machinery of the Delhi Sultanate. I have engaged with different arguments that have been offered by contemporary historians in the Delhi court and that of the Ilkhans. I have also used the

[11] Barni, 1860-1862, pp. 252-253.
[12] See Amitai, Mongols and Mamluks for an in-depth analysis of the Ilkhan-Mamluk rivalry.
[13] Mongol immigrants after 1260 in the Mamluk Empire and the Delhi Sultanate respectively.

source materials on the Mamluks who remained independent and are widely viewed as the most formidable opponents of the Mongols for the sake of comparison. References to the Mamluks and the Delhi Sultanate are by no means restricted to their characteristic 'Slave Dynasty' epithet, but rather have been used for the sake of supplying a framework to emphasise simultaneous developments and successful strategies against the Mongols.

Chapter four centres on the Mongols residing in Hindustan and includes a comparison with a parallel development in the Mamluk Sultanate. The story of the neo-Muslim Mongols in the court and their role in the upper echelons of the nobility, at times playing king makers and eventually becoming fugitives and rebels is echoed in the Mamluk Kingdom. The chapter grapples with Mongol identity in Hindustan as also the perception of the Mongols by Indians, Muslim and non-Muslim and their self-perception. An interesting twist to the tale of the Mongols in Hindustan is their alliance with the Hindu Rajputs where notions of identity, loyalty and military skills play out brilliantly. Finally, the conclusion offers a view of the impact and influence of the Mongols and how narrowly Hindustan escaped the yoke of the Mongol World Empire.

The intention of this thesis is to inform the body of work that already exists on the Mongols and Hindustan. I propose to show that there was more than a cursory desire for the conquest of Hindustan on the part of the Mongols. This discussion involves two aspects, successive Mongol attacks from the Chaghatai Mongols, and the neo-Muslim Mongol king-makers in Delhi. What would have happened if the candidate that the Mongols were supporting would have actually become Sultan is a point of speculation but nonetheless demands some consideration. In a similar vein, the invasions by the Central Asian Mongols came very close to defeating the armies of Islam, the Delhi Sultanate, and laying claims to Delhi but they also failed.

The primary sources available for the discussion of this topic include Muslim and non-Muslim, as well as Indian and Ilkhanid. I have attempted to introduce and contextualise the primary source material for this project. The Indian and the Mongol sources are in Persian, other than one Indian source that was written in Sanskrit. We have access to chronicles left us by Indian historians and poets writing in the 13-14th centuries, as well as historians writing under the Ilkhans. Unfortunately, even though most of the Mongol military campaigns into Hindustan were undertaken by Central Asian Mongols, we do not have records from the Chaghatais. I have also used a Sanskrit source, which was written in the 15th century and provides us with a non-Muslim perspective on the Mongols within Hindustan. These Jain scholars writing about Rajput rulers in conflict with the Muslim rulers of the Delhi Sultanate add interesting dimensions to this discussion. They provoke a look at the fabric of Hindu-Muslim, Hindu-Mongol, and/or Hindu-Muslim-Mongol relationships in Hindustan in the 13-14th centuries. They also lend themselves very vividly to the understanding of the perception and memory of the Mongols in Hindustan. It is perhaps necessary to point out that the chroniclers of the Delhi Sultanate as that of the Ilkhans were patronised by the rulers and a fair degree of caution has been exercised when using the accounts. The section is divided between Indian sources which include Persian and non-Persian sources, and the Ilkhanid sources. The discussion on primary sources is followed by a short note on modern historiography.

Indian Sources:

Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) wrote "[The] *Khaza'in ul Futuh* which has been valued as the only history extant which was written in the reign of Sultan Ala al-Din Khalji."[14] He supplies us with an eyewitness account of the Mongols, especially since he was a Mongol prisoner of war in the 1280s. He was a court poet in the second half of the 13th century-early 14th century (1272-1325) in the Delhi Sultanate. He has recorded events of the Delhi Sultanate rulers largely in the form of poems and *ghazals* from the time of Balban to Ghiyas al-Din Tughlaq. Even though Amir Khusrau was not a historian and has not recorded every event his works give us a unique insight into the

[14] Hardy, 1960, p. 76.

Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century. Amir Khusrau has recorded the victories of the Delhi Sultan against the Mongols along with the campaigns against Hindustan's Hindu kingdoms, especially Ranthambore, Gujarat, and Malabar. Amir Khusrau supplies us with dates which other historians like Zia al-Din Barni leave out, especially of the Mongol campaigns into Hindustan, namely in *Khaza'in ul-Futuh*..[15] The descriptions of the battles against the Mongols in Ala al-Din Khalji's reign convey feelings of the victories of Muslim armies against the infidel Mongols on the territory of Hindustan. The pride with which the Muslim Delhi Sultanate is described also indicates that the Mongol onslaught on the Islamic world formed the backdrop to Amir Khusrau's writings. Furthermore, Amir Khusrau's imagery of the gory details of the defeat of the Mongols, with bodies and heads strewn on the battlefield, and flags of Islam flying high in the air signifying victory for the Delhi Sultanate are beyond translation but have been used to produce images of the perception of the Mongols by the chroniclers of Hindustan. I have used the popularly used Wahid Mirza's Persian text of Amir Khusrau's *Khaza'in ul-Futuh.*

Zia al-Din Barni (1285-1357) gives a detailed description of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate and as a member of a family who served in the Delhi court offers an insightful account of the neo-Muslims and the Central Asian Mongols. He completed the *Ta'rikh-i Firoz Shahi* in 1357 and this work spans the reigns of Balban down to Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Barni's account is a continuation of Minhaj Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* which began with the Ghurid kings and ends just short of the beginning of Balban's reign as Sultan. Barni's family was well connected with the ruling circles in Delhi and served the Delhi Sultans in the second half of the 13th century. His maternal grandfather had been given the post of *shahna*[16] of Lakhnauti by Balban, while his father had been a *na'ib* to Jalal al-Din Khalji's son, Arkali Khan in Multan, and his uncle, Malik Ala al-Mulk, was the trusted *kotwal* of Ala al-Din Khalji. Thus, most of the historical information found in the *Ta'rikh-i Firoz Shahi* regarding Balban and his immediate successor was collected from Barni's maternal grandfather. While, Barni's source for Jalal al-Din Khalji's reign was his father and Barni himself experienced Jalal al-Din Khalji's reign as a child. Barni was a young man in Ala al-Din Khalji's reign and spent time in the company of court poets, like Amir Khusrau and Hasan

[15] Hanfee, 1975, p. 181.
[16] Governor.

Sizji. Barni's work has received a lot of attention from modern historians[17] who have variously opined on the validity and motivation of what is reported in the *Ta'rikh-i Firoz Shahi.* For Barni his historical text was as informative as it was instructive and served a religious purpose.[18] Peter Hardy tends to think that Barni's narrative is questionable primarily because of his putting his own words into the mouths of Sultans, along with the obvious religious overtones that are found abundantly in his work. However, Sarkar points out that K. Nizami believes that despite Barni's obvious religious overtones, he was an honest scholar of history and his account provides us with important details about the social, political and military account of the time period.[19] According to Nizami and Sarkar, Barni's account is authentic because his sources for his information were eye witnesses – his grandfather, uncle, father and he himself.[20] This does not mean that Barni can be the only source when studying the history of the Delhi Sultanate, or for our purposes, the reigns of Balban through to that of Ala al-Din Khalji, but that the *Ta'rikh-i Firoz Shahi* represents a reasonably honest account of the period. It has also been used extensively by nearly all scholars of the Delhi Sultanate. There is a comprehensive account of battles fought by the Delhi Sultanate rulers against the Mongols (primarily from Central Asia) who invaded Hindustan year on year at the end of the 13th century.

The perception of the Mongol nobility within Hindustan in the pages of Barni's history allow us a peek into not only their role in the court of Jalal al-Din and Ala al-Din Khalji but provides us with a feel for how they were still perceived half a century later even after their massacre. It is impossible to believe that Barni's attitude to the neo-Muslims was not in large part a direct consequence of the incessant Mongol invasions and the fear of conquest that the Mongols posed to the existence of the Delhi Sultanate even after 100 years of their existence. Central Asian Mongols remained interested in Hindustan even after Ala al-Din's death and after a brief period of respite had launched fresh campaigns against Hindustan in 1328 and subsequently. I have used Sir S.A Khan's incomparable edited volume of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi* for reference.

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[17] Hardy, K.A. Nizami.
[18] Hardy, 1960, pp. 20-25.
[19] Sarkar, 1977, p. 85.
[20] Nizami, 2002, pp. 37-39.

The use of the non-Muslim epic Sanskrit poem written in praise of Rajput Kings conveys a different perspective on the neo-Muslim Mongols in Hindustan. Nyaychandra Suri, a Jain scholar wrote the *Hammir Mahakavya* based on the information provided by his mentor, Jayachandra, who was an eye witness of the ruler of Ranthambhore (Hammir). The poem was written between 1440 and 1467 and has fourteen parts and 1,576 lines.[21] Since he was not a court historian, the inspiration for his work seems to have come from his mentor, popular folklore and the respect for Hammir Deva widespread in that period. Hammir was popularly recalled as the brave, patriotic and selfless figure, who remained a symbol of resistance against the mighty forces of the Muslim rulers of Hindustan. Nyaychandra describes the battle for the fort of Ranthambore (1301) in detail and gives intricate characterisations of Hammir and also Muhammad Shah,[22] the neo-Muslim Mongol leader from the Sultanate army who sought asylum at Hammir's court.

His non-Muslim account of the siege of Ranthambhore used in conjunction with Amir Khusrau's expands on the information we have on military tactics, sorties and battles. He gives us an account of intimate details of goings-on within Hammir's court inside the fort and their view of Ala al-Din's encampments outside. Ala al-Din Khalji is necessarily portrayed as the menacing Muslim ruler who overthrew the brave Rajputs by seducing a Hindu minister of Hammir, Hindu traitors being a constant theme in this chronicle with regards to the Muslim invasions which highlight a campaign of dirty tricks used by the Delhi Sultanate. However, it is the emphasis on the loyalty of the neo-Muslim Mongols that is most striking. That this was written before the later Mughal alliances with the Rajputs precludes it from being influenced in the light of the successes that the Rajputs experienced with Akbar for instance. I have used this account specifically to give a more detailed account of the Mongols (neo-Muslims) in Hindustan.

A note on the use of Indian texts like that of Barni and Amir Khusrau is appropriate here in regard to the Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate. It is perhaps important to point out that in the description of the battles between the Chaghatai Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate especially under Ala al-Din Khalji, the victories of the Delhi Sultanate are

[21] Candra, 2003, pp. 19-20.
[22] Ibid., p. 119.

ascribed to miraculous acts or are left unexplained, as opposed to biased in the favour of Ala al-Din Khalji as would be expected. The use of Indian sources to study the Mongols (Neo-Muslims) within Hindustan is a consequence of the following, firstly, non-Indian sources do not mention these neo-Muslim Mongols,[23] and secondly, I have also used non-Delhi Sultanate sources, i.e. Hindu sources. Thus, the story of the Mongols residing within the Delhi Sultanate from approximately 1260 to the time of their massacre under Ala al-Din Khalji derives entirely from Indian sources. Primarily, these are Barni and Amir Khusrau, followed by later day historians like Nyaychandra Suri and Firishta who provide relevant information to help consolidate a picture of these Mongols in Balban's reign and another group under Jalal al-Din Khalji. Barni leaves us with a fairly extensive account of the condition and actions of this group of Mongols in Delhi under Balban, Kayqubad, Jalal al-Din Khalji and Ala al-Din Khalji, especially of their eventual massacre in 1311. While, Nyayachadra Suri's epic poem provides us with a detailed character sketch of the neo-Muslim Mongols, Muhammad Shah and his companions. Nyaychandra Suri fills gaps left by the Muslim historians in that he supplies us with personal attributes of the Mongols, and it forms the basis of a counter perspective to the Muslim sources of the Sultanate.

Ilkhanid Sources:

Among the Mongol sources we find information in Rashid al-Din's *Jami 'al-Tawarikh*, Wassaf's *Tarikh-i Wassaf* and Qashani's *Tarikh-i Oljeitu*. It is important to point out that the Ilkhans were in conflict with the Central Asian Mongols and thus their accounts may be influenced by their pro-Ilkhan stance. Additionally, the Central Asian Mongols at this time were not Muslim while the Delhi Sultanate was an example of an independent Islamic state which is evidently important from Wassaf's discussion of Ala al-Din's reign.

Rashid al-Din's work gives us the relevant information to set the backdrop of the Mongol World Empire. He wrote about India in the '*Tarikh-i Hind wa Sind*' (The Book of India and Sindh) and this book is divided into two parts: the first focuses on the geography and habits and the religion of the people, the reigns of the Delhi

[23] Just like the information on the Mongols (the *Wafadiyas*) in the Mamluk state in the late 13th century are only found in the Mamluk sources.

Sultans, and also the rulers of Kashmir; the second deals principally with Buddhism.[24] The source for the first part is mostly Al-Biruni's book on India, personal observations and travellers' accounts, while the second part is attributed to a Buddhist monk, Kamalshri, from Kashmir who spent time with Rashid al-Din in Iran. Rashid al-Din claims to have gone to Delhi at least twice, once in an embassy sent in the reign of Ala al-Din Khalji and the second time in Mubarak Shah's reign (1316-1320). There are six letters in Rashid's epistolary collection that refer to Hindustan. Letter number XXIX gives details of the diplomatic mission that Rashid al-Din was part of when he went to Hindustan.[25] These letters of Rashid al-Din which relate to his visit to India have been proven to be works of fiction leaving no doubt that he never went to India.[26] Despite that Rashid al-Din's work provides the most thorough account of the Ilkhans and also supplies us with details of the Central Asian Mongols. Rashid al-Din's account brings us details of the perception of India in the Mongol realm. I have used two editions of the *Jami 'al-Tawarikh* namely that of Alizadah and Muḥammad Rawshan.

Abdullah ibn Fazlullah Wassaf gives us a more detailed and insightful chapter on Ala al-Din. He also provides us with information on the Central Asian Mongols. Wassaf finished writing the *Tarikh-i Wassaf* in 1327-28 and collected information mainly from travellers and other sources. His account provides us with Mongol incursions, campaigns in Hindustan, Ala al-Din Khalji's campaigns of the Hindu kingdoms of Hindustan, and Ilkhan interest in Hindustan.[27] Wassaf's work not only contains references to the direct contact between the Central Asian Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate, but also gives us information that sheds light on the motivation that lay behind the Chaghatai invasions of Hindustan beginning with the 1290s. Wassaf's account has helped inform the discussion on the crisis within the different *uluses* of the Mongols in the late 13th century, which had led to a state of civil war in the Mongol empire. Also, the fact that Hindustan and Ala al-Din Khalji appear in this historical account give us an idea of the interest in the Delhi Sultanate not only in Central Asia for reasons of expansion but also in the Ilkhanid court. He provides us with the only account of the embassy sent by Oljeitu to Ala al-Din's court and the

[24] Nizami, 2002, pp. 96-97.
[25] Ibid. , pp. 99-104.
[26] Morton, 1999, pp. 164-165.
[27] Luniya, 1969, p. 117.

unthinkable point of no retaliation when Ala al-Din murders the envoys. I have used the easily accessible version of *Tarikh-i Wassaf*, namely the edited volume produced by Abd al-Muhammad Ayati.

Abu'l Qasim Abdullah ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Qashani dedicates a section of his work to Ala al-Din Khalji. He wrote *Tarikh-i Oljeitu* sometime in 1318-19, in the reign of Oljeitu's son, Abu Sa'id. It is a straightforward account which can be faulted for inaccuracies in dates and names but lays out the events in simple language. He identifies events in the Ilkhanate and in Central Asia which allow us to corroborate the account left us by Wassaf.[28] Qashani for the purposes of this work details the invasion of Hindustan by Kutlugh Khwaja and the victory of Ala al-Din's armies over the Chaghatai Mongols. His account also depicts in gory detail the rivers of blood and the severed limbs of the Mongols at the hands of the Khalji war machinery. M Hambly's edited volume of Qashani's *Tarikh-i Oljeitu* informs the discussion with regards to this text.

Secondary Sources-

These primary sources have been used by modern day historians to study and analyse the Delhi Sultanate. Scholars like John Briggs, Elliot and Dowson, Wahid Mirza, and W. Haig have translated most of the Persian works of contemporary and later day historians like Amir Khusrau, Barni and Firishta which have been used in conjunction with the primary source material. The works of Peter Jackson, Andre Wink, R. Majumdar and K.S. Lal, to name just a few, have been used extensively here. I. Togan, Ratchnevsky, Michal Biran and David Ayalon helped provide a detailed look on Chinggis Khan, Central Asian Mongols and the Mamluks respectively. J.J. Saunders, J.N. Sarkar and Simon Digby provide a detailed account of the armies and the military strategies of the Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate. K.S.Lal, A. Srivastava and D. Sharma furnish information on the Rajputs and their conflict with the Delhi Sultans in the 13th century.

Andre Wink's Al-Hind[29] and Peter Jackson's The Delhi Sultanate have been used extensively and deserve special mention. While Wink gives an overview of the

[28] Qashani, 1969, pp. v-vii.
[29] See Wink, 2001.

conditions of Hindustan at the time of the first Muslim invasions, it is the work of Jackson on the Delhi Sultanate that proved most useful to my area of interest. Andre Wink's seminal work on Hindustan provides the most comprehensive picture of Hindustan in the 13th century. Beginning with the Ghurids and Ghaznavids, the Hindu Kingdoms of Hindustan, the foundation and establishment of the Delhi Sultanate under the Turks from Central Asia taken together create the fabric of the history of the period in the subcontinent. Wink supplies details with regards to politics, military and trade to create an intricate picture of the events leading up to the end of the 13th century.

It is to Jackson[30] that I turn to find information regarding the Khalji Delhi Sultanate and the Central Asian Mongols. Jackson's work provides a detailed account of the Delhi Sultanate, the Mongol World Empire and the Hindu kingdoms of Hindustan in the 13th and 14th centuries. The use of a wide variety of sources available for this time period not only confirms attention to minute details regarding the Delhi Sultans but in conjunction with his knowledge of the Mongols provides easy access to the history of the Indian subcontinent. Jackson not only dwells on the interaction between the Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate but offers a comprehensive look at the internal politics of both Empires thus building a vast body of knowledge with regards to the Hindustan and its position at a time when the Mongols dominated most of the world. I have used his work extensively to build the argument of the Mongol endeavour, Central Asian and neo-Muslim, to make Hindustan a part of the Mongol World Empire in the 13th century. In the following pages I hope to show that Hindustan proved stronger against the persistent assaults of the Central Asian Mongols, while at the same time quashing internal uprisings led by the neo-Muslim Mongols, and remained independent of Mongol control.

[30] See Jackson, 1999.

It is appropriate to begin with a brief summary of the origin and the early years of the Mongol Empire and the Delhi Sultanate. Incidentally, the Mongol Empire and the Delhi Sultanate came into existence almost simultaneously in 1206. Chinggis Khan was elected as the Qa'an in the *kuriltai* of 1206, and Qutb al-Din Aybeg established his rule in Lahore in the same year. While Chinggis Khan and his Mongol Empire grew to encompass China, Russia, Persia and Central Asia by the end of the 13th century; the Delhi Sultanate strengthened its control over Hindustan and its Hindu kingdoms in the west and south, by the turn of the century. The biggest threat to the Delhi Sultanate remained the ever expanding Mongol Empire all through the 13th century. Both empires experienced succession struggles after the death of their founders but remained strong and continued to expand. This chapter sets out the historical background of the Mongol Empire and the Delhi Sultanate separately and with regards to their interaction with each other.

The Delhi Sultanate-

Muslim rule commenced in Hindustan-proper with the founding of the Delhi Sultanate in the early 13th century. These Muslim rulers remained in power for the next three centuries and within a few years of their collapse the Mughals from Central Asia under the leadership of Babur continued Muslim domination in Hindustan. In the 12th century the arrival of the Muslim armies of Ghur and Ghazna first signalled the capitulation of Hindu kingdoms in the territories of Hindustan. Muhammad of Ghazna led his first expedition to Hindustan in 1175 and began the struggle with the Hindu-Rajput kings of Northern Hindustan. Initially, Muhammad and his Muslim armies were more successful against Multan, Uch, Lahore and the north western frontier of Hindustan which fast became part of Ghazna territory.[31] While the Hindu Rajas proved more difficult to conquer as was evident from the failure of the first military engagement between Muhammad and Prithvi Raj Chauhan (ruler of India at Ajmer) in 1190-91 at Taraori and Karnal. Muhammad was defeated at the hands of the Hindu-Rajput armies and had to return to Ghazna. He returned in 1192 for a second battle at

[31] Wink, 2001, p. 145.

Taraori and this time defeated Prithvi Raj and appointed a Hindu vassal in Ajmer.[32] However, this did not end Hindu resistance which continued to raise its head under leaders like Hemraj (Prithvi Raj's brother in Ranthmabhore) and the rulers of Gujarat. In 1194, Ranthambhore was brought under Ghurid sway by Qutb al-Din Aybeg, a slave commander of Muhammad of Ghazna. Hemraj's armies were defeated and a Muslim officer was appointed in Ajmer. In 1195, Aybeg initiated a campaign against Gujarat to take vengeance for an earlier defeat and brought back plunder to Muhammad in Ghazna and was subsequently left alone in India to found the dynasty which came to be called the Delhi Sultanate. Aybeg's subsequent independence in Hindustan was in large part due to the disturbances in Khurasan and the rise of the Khwarezm Shah, which occupied the attention of the brothers in Ghazna and kept them away from Hindustan.[33] In 1206 Muhammad of Ghazna came to India to crush a rebellion by the Khokhars[34] and on his way back was assassinated, leaving Aybeg to struggle with other powerful slave commanders to retain control over Hindustan which he successfully managed until his untimely demise in 1210.[35]

Aybeg's death led to the division of Sind and Hind into four governorships with power in the hands of the slaves of both Muiz al-Din and Aybeg, who exercised all power. Aybeg's son, Aram Shah, was installed on to the throne but by then Qabacha, a former slave of Muiz al-din who had paid allegiance to Aybeg, declared independence in Lahore, and Ali-yi Mardan, another slave commander, did the same in Bengal. Aram Shah's weak personality drove the nobles in Delhi to overthrow him in 1211 and enthrone Aybeg's son-in-law and former slave, Shams al-Din Iltutmysh.[36] This sparked a power struggle between the powerful Turkish slave commanders, namely Iltutmysh, Qabacha, Yildiz and the Khalji rulers of Bengal. Iltutmysh came out the winner helped indirectly by Chinggis Khan who attacked the territory of Sind where the Khwarezm Shah had fled.[37] The Khwarezm Shah had driven Yildiz out of Ghazna in 1216 and into Lahore and Delhi where he was defeated by Iltutmysh.[38] The Khwarezm Shah had also pushed Qabacha out of Lahore and in 1221 Chinggis Khan

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[32] Wink, 2001, p. 146. See also Haig, 1934, pp. 38-42.
[33] Wink, 2001, p. 149.
[34] Hindu tribe. Jackson, 1999, p. 13.
[35] Wassaf, 1967, p.187. See also Jackson, 1999, p. 29.
[36] Jackson, 1999, pp. 29-31.
[37] Rashid al-Din, 1994, p. 577.
[38] Jackson, 1999, p. 30.

forced the Khwarezm Shah to flee into Hindustan.[39] Chinggis Khan chose not to raid Hindustan on his way back to Mongolia, leaving Iltutmysh (1211-1236) relatively free of the Mongols, while the Khwarezm Shah left his main rival, Qabacha, very weak. It is not clear why Chinggis Khan spared Hindustan and among the various reasons cited the Tangut rebellion which had broken out in China seems the most convincing reason for his departure. Additionally, Juvaini and some Chinese sources cite bad omens that made Chinggis Khan cancel his plans for invading Hindustan-proper.[40] In 1226, Ranthambhore which had fallen back into Rajput hands after Aybeg's death came under the rule of the Delhi Sultans once again. In 1228-29, Iltutmysh had the 'Abbasid Caliph acknowledge his rule as the Sultan of Delhi, he defeated the Khalji chiefs of Bengal in 1230[41] and with Kamal ud-Din Muhammad Junaidi's continued siege of Bhakkar and the news of Qabacha's drowning, Iltutmysh became the sole Muslim ruler of Hind and Sind, until his death in 1236.[42]

Iltutmysh's death sparked an extended period of succession struggles between his son, Firuz Shah, and his daughter, Raziyya. However, in reality the real masters of the Delhi Sultanate were the slaves of Iltutmysh who were in powerful positions in the nobility and were calling all the shots. Nevertheless, Firuz Shah ascended the throne for a brief period of time when a rebellion overthrew him and installed Raziyya in his place who ruled from 1236-1240.[43] Another mutiny led to her imprisonment and the enthronement of another brother, Muiz al-Din Bahram, who also ruled for two years. He in turn was replaced by Ala al-Din Mas`ud Shah, who was gotten rid of in favour of Iltutmysh's youngest son, Nasir al-Din Mahmud Shah, who stayed on the throne for the next two decades in large part thanks to Iltutmysh's Shamsi slave, Baha-al-Din Balban.[44] Nasir al-Din's court was a refuge for kings fleeing from Central Asia and Persia when the Mongols descended on them in the middle of the 13th century.[45] In 1265, Mahmud's death tolled the bell for Balban to ascend the throne. While, Wassaf accuses Balban of murdering his son-in-law, the Sultan, to gain possession of the

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[39] Ibid., p. 32.
[40] Ratchnevsky, 1993, p. 134.
[41] Jackson, 1999, pp. 36-37.
[42] Haig, 1934, pp. 53-55.
[43] Wassaf, 1967, p.187.
[44] Jackson, 1999, p. 55. See also Wink, 2001, pp. 157-158.
[45] Elliot & Dowson, 1963, p. 7.

throne;[46] Barni's account of Balban does not mention the alleged murder, nor does Amir Khusrau. Baha-ud-Din Balban was bought by Iltutmysh and was in the ranks of the powerful Turkish slaves, the '*chihilganis'* or 'group of forty'.[47] He had already been made *Amir Hajib*[48] when his daughter became the chief wife of Sultan Nasir al-Din and enjoyed a powerful status in court.

With Balban's acquisition of power we arrive at the point of the main topic of the thesis. As the title of the thesis suggests, Mongols in Hindustan, the neo-Muslim Mongols as they were referred to first appeared in Delhi in Balban's reign. In his bid to weaken the power of the *chihilganis*, he welcomed ethnic Mongols (*amirs* and soldiers) along with Persian and Central Asian kings who had been removed by the Mongol invasions of the 13th century. These refugees, especially the Mongols helped build up a new support group for him. It is reported that there were up to fifteen royal neighbourhoods set up in Delhi, which included the '*Muhalla Chingizi'* where Mongol refugees resided. Many of these Mongols enjoyed high office in the military and were among the highest ranks of the nobility.[49] Moreover, Balban's reign provided a stable and efficient government that lasted for two decades which further helped solidify the position of these Mongol elites. A thorough discussion of the role of these Mongols and the perception of their identity in Delhi Sultanate politics and society is in chapter four.

As with Balban's accession to power, his death marked a second but equally important juncture with regards to the Mongols within Delhi. A coalition of nobles with Malik Nizam al-Din as the leader accompanied by neo-Muslim Mongol nobles brought Balban's grandson, Kayqubad, to power and exercised control through him.[50] Within the coalition, Malik Nizam al-Din proved more cunning than the other nobles and successfully got rid of all the powerful *amirs*, including the neo-Muslims.[51] The murder of the neo-Muslim leaders has special resonance since it was the first incident of raising suspicions against Mongol nobles in Delhi who were accused of relations

[46] Wassaf, 1967, p.188.
[47] Briggs, 1908, p. 249.
[48] Lord Chamberlain. Briggs, 1908, p. 249.
[49] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 134.
[50] Ibid., p. 134. See also Wink, 2001, pp. 210-211.
[51] Mongol immigrants in Hindustan.

with the invading Mongols and thus perceived as a threat to the Sultanate.[52] In any event Kayqubad only survived for four years and with his murder the rule of the Turkish slaves in Delhi came to an end. The Delhi Sultanate experienced another succession struggle and factions within the Delhi court which included free Turks, Khalaj, Tajiks and the Mongols,[53] brought about a revolution which ended with an Afghan-Khalaj on the throne.[54] Jalal al-Din Khalji usurped power of the Delhi Sultanate in 1290 and thus began non-Turkic rule in Delhi for the next two decades.[55]

The occasion of Jalal al-Din's reign brings us to another significant arrival of a second group of Mongols in 1292 which is discussed in detail in chapter four.[56] Jalal al-Din ruled for a period of six years and his rule is most remembered for his benevolence and for his respect for Muslim lives as described by Barni.[57] It was marked by leniency even towards his rivals who were plotting to overthrow him. Jalal al-Din undertook few campaigns, which were not altogether unsuccessful. Significantly for Delhi Sultanate-Rajput relations, his campaign against Ranthambhore was unsuccessful.[58] Jalal al-Din's reign began with the murder of Kayqubad and came to an abrupt end with his own murder at the hands of his nephew, Ala al-Din Khalji, in 1296.[59]

By all accounts Ala al-Din's reign marked a turning point for the Delhi Sultanate and for this thesis. He thwarted Mongol invasions from Central Asia and his reign marked the end of the neo-Muslim Mongols in Delhi in the massacre of 1310-1311.[60] We have access to accounts by Amir Khusrau and Barni of Ala al-Din's reign, as also sections on Ala al-Din's reign in histories written by Wassaf, Rashid al-Din and Qashani. The Mongol threat hung over Hindustan like never before with invasions every year and two invasions when the Mongols were encamped in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Ala al-Din inflicted memorable defeats on the Central Asian Mongols which are detailed in chapter three. Specifically, with regards to the neo-

[52] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 134.
[53] Jackson, 1999, p. 61.
[54] Wink, 2001, p. 161.
[55] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 173.
[56] Ibid., p. 218.
[57] Ibid., p. 173.
[58] Ibid., pp. 212-213.
[59] Ibid., p. 240.
[60] Ibid., pp. 334-336.

Muslim Mongol rebellion of 1298 which foreshadowed the 1310 massacre, the Hindu-Mongol alliance with the Rajputs is noteworthy. Thus, it is imperative to discuss the history of the Rajputs who were subjugated by Ala al-Din. The following is a brief summary of the relationship between the Delhi Sultanate rulers and the Rajput kingdoms in Hindustan in the 13th century.

Rajputs-

Ala al-Din's reign is as famous for the extension of control of Muslim rulers into Hindu-controlled Rajput dominions and the Deccan, as it is for defending Hindustan from Mongol conquest. While, the Muslim armies had displaced the Hindu Rajput rulers, they had not subjugated them fully until the reign of Ala al-Din. Rulers of Rajasthan had been in conflict with nearly all the Delhi Sultans. Ranthambhore and Gujarat had presented major obstacles to the Delhi Sultans in their ambitions of over-running and controlling all of Hindustan. These conflicts were couched in terms of competition between Hindu-Muslim kingdoms since the time of Qutb al-Din Aybeg. As already stated Prithvi Raj Chauhan was the most defiant of the Hindu kings and proved difficult to defeat in the first attempt. Gujarat and Jalor had to be reinvested many times, just as the fort of Ranthambhore remained the centre of anti-Muslim and anti-Delhi Sultanate activity throughout the 13th century.

Among the rulers of Ranthambhore and the Rajputs, Hammir Deva deserves special mention not only because he was the most powerful Rajput ruler in the second half of the 13th century but also for his alliance with the neo-Muslim Mongols. This was a unique example of the enemies of the Delhi Sultanate i.e. the Mongols and the Hindus coming together to threaten Ala al-Din's rule. This one of a kind relationship is examined in chapter four. Hammir became the ruler of Ranthambhore in 1282 and carved out a supreme position among the independent Rajput states in the aftermath of the chaos of Balban's death.[61] Significantly, the chronicles of the Rajputs trace Hammir's ancestry back to Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Beginning with the neighbouring kingdoms of Malwa, Mewar, Maharashtra, Pushkar, Ujjain and Dhara, Hammir campaigned and weakened the other Rajput kingdoms.[62] Hammir's successful campaigns led to acquisition of wealth, especially against Gujarat as reported by

[61] Bakshi, 2000, p. 143.
[62] Sharma, 1966-1996, pp. 621-623.

Wassaf,[63] which helped expand his army and made him even more ambitious. He also successfully fought Jalal al-Din Firuz Khalji and retained his independence from the Delhi Sultanate and represented an obstacle to Ala al-Din's domination of all of Hindustan.[64] Indian historians referring to both Muslim and Hindu historical sources indicate an inevitable conflict between the ambitious Hammir Deva and Ala al-Din Khalji, both of whom had expansionist intentions and policies. And as it happened the eventual acquisition of Ranthambhore led to the conquest of other parts of Hindustan which the Delhi Sultans had not been able to wrest out of the hands of the Hindu kings as late as the end of the 13th century.[65]

Ranthambhore was not the only insubordinate Hindu kingdom; the rulers of Jalor shared a similar strained relationship with the Delhi Sultans. In the reign of Ala al-Din, Jalor, under Kanhadadeva, had remained defiant in not allowing the Khalji army passage during the 1298 Gujarat campaign.[66] The ruler of Jalor had also attacked the Khalji army on its way back from Gujarat. In 1305, Ala al-Din launched a campaign against King Kanhadadeva and for a brief period of time he agreed to submit to Ala al-Din but returned shortly after being treated badly at court by Ala al-Din. For the next five years Kanhadadeva unrelentingly launched attacks on the Sultanate forces but to no avail. In 1310 Ala al-Din sent an army to Siwana, which was ruled by Kanhadadeva's nephew Sataladeva, which quickly fell to the Delhi Sultanate despite troops sent by Kanhadadeva. Significantly, Hindu sources declare a shortage of water as the primary reason for the defeat rather than military superiority of the Delhi Sultanate army. Next, Ala al-Din sent an army to Marwar, en route his troops were attacked by the *samantas* (commanders) of Kanhadadeva.[67] Ala al-Din persisted and eventually defeated Marwar which was under the rule of Kanhadadeva's brother and son, Maladeva and Virama respectively.[68] A last siege on Jalor was successful and according to Rajput sources, just as in the case of Ranthambhore, a *Hindu* traitor[69] led the Sultanate army into the Jalor fort at night. Kanhadadeva committed his family to

[63] Wassaf, 1967, p. 264.
[64] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 213.
[65] Jackson, 1999, p. 134.
[66] Barni, 1860-1862, pp. 250-251.
[67] Sharma, 1966-1996, p. 645.
[68] Ibid., p. 645.
[69] Sharma, 1966-1996, p. 646.

jauhar[70] and escaped to the temple of Kanhasvamin and was heard of no more.[71] The Chauhan dynasty of Jalor was vanquished and Ala al-Din returned to Delhi victorious. Ala al-Din went on to conquer Malwa, Ujjain and eventually also the Deccan.[72]

Just as the neo-Muslim Mongols represent a Hindu-Mongol alliance against the Delhi Sultanate, they also serve to open the discussion of a comparison with the Mamluk Empire. The Delhi Sultanate and the Mamluk Empire in Egypt and Syria were the only two Muslim empires to escape conquest by the Mongols in the second half of the 13th century.[73] The Mongols swept over Baghdad, Bukhara, Samarkand and Khwarezm but were stopped at the frontiers of Hindustan and Egypt. With this in mind, it is worthwhile to summarise the developments in the Mamluk Empire which in many ways echoed what happened in the Delhi Sultanate not only in escaping conquest by the Mongols but also specifically with regards to Mongol immigrants in the respective societies beginning in the 1260s. While, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to include a detailed history of the Mamluk kingdom, a brief description of the key events of the Mamluk Empire follows next.

Mamluks-

The military victories over the crusader forces of Louis IX in 1250[74] and the Ilkhans at Ayn Jalut in 1260 paved the way for Mamluk rule for the next 200 years.[75] Mamluk Sultans namely, Baybars I, Qalawun and al-Khalil, built Egypt and Syria into a considerable power between 1260 and 1291. Their policies led to a united, prosperous and strong Mamluk Empire. Even though Baybars I was unsuccessful at establishing a dynasty with his mamluks (*Zahiryyas*) exercising control,[76] he was successful in keeping the Mongols at bay and providing stability to Egypt and Syria which continued to maintain their independence from the Mongol Empire.

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[70] Voluntary death of the royal Rajput men and women in order to avoid capture and dishonour at the hands of enemies.
[71] Sharma, 1966-1996, p. 647.
[72] Jackson, 1999, pp. 193-201.
[73] Humphreys, 1977, p. 454.
[74] Irwin, 1986, p. 21.
[75] Ibid., pp. 32-34.
[76] Irwin, 1986, pp. 62-64.

Baybars I was succeeded by Qalawun (1279-1290) who continued the policies of his predecessor and even though he set up a dynasty, succession did not run smoothly. He was also able to keep the Mongols out of Egypt and after his death he was succeeded by his son, al-Ashraf Khalil who was murdered three years into his reign. His death sparked a power struggle and political instability that lasted for the next seventeen years.[77] Khalil was succeeded by his brother, the ten years old al-Nasir Muhammad, who lost the throne twice to usurpers. Nasir Muhammad's court had various factions which drove him from the throne two times before he managed to strengthen his position. Mamluks of Qalawun - Kitbugha (Mongol-Wafidiya),[78] Lajin, Baybars II (Circassian Mamluk) - usurped the throne and al-Nasir only managed to get rid of them and hold power after 1310.[79] First, Kitbugha, an Oirat Mongol, usurped the throne in 1294 when al-Nasir's reign had only lasted a year. Kitbugha in turn was replaced by al-Mansur Lajin in 1296. Chapter four details the rise of power of a Mongol (Kitbugha) to the Mamluk throne and discusses the status and treatment of Mongol immigrants in the Mamluk Empire beginning in the 1260s. Lajin ruled for two years and al-Nasir returned to rule from 1299 to 1309 when he was again dethroned, this time by a Circassian Mamluk of Qalawun's, Baybars II.[80] Baybars II who had been supported by another Oirat, Sallar, was murdered by al-Nasir and a period of stability for thirty years began in Egypt and Syria.[81]

Mamluk politics akin to Delhi Sultanate politics in the second half of the 13th century were driven by factions in court and with each new addition of an ethnic group (Oirats, Circassians etc) the power struggles intensified. After 1310, al-Nasir Muhammad enjoyed a stable reign especially in light of that fact that this is when the Ilkhans stopped attacking this region. The last aborted mission was in 1312-1313 under Ilkhan Oljeitu after which al-Nasir was left alone to focus on establishing internal stability.[82] Holt refers to al-Nasir's reign as an autocracy and arbitrary rule. The Sultan's position was quite strong and this was further proven by the fact that al-Nasir left Cairo on three different occasion to visit the Holy Cities and maintained his rule despite his absence. al-Nasir Muhammad's death sparked another extended

[77] Holt, 1970, pp. 321-323.
[78] Mongol immigrants to the Mamluk Empire were called Wafidiya.
[79] Irwin, 1986, pp. 18-23.
[80] Irwin, 1986, pp. 88-89.
[81] Muir, 1896, pp. 60-67.
[82] Irwin, 1986, p. 118.

period of political instability with a total of twelve Sultans on the throne supported by different groups of the nobility in half a century.[83]

We can now focus on the Mongols who were the biggest challenge to the sovereignty of both the Delhi Sultanate and the Mamluk Empire. The following discussion reviews the basic history of the Mongol World Empire beginning with Chinggis Khan in 1206 and ends with the division of the Empire among his descendants.

Mongol World Empire-

The rise of Chinggis Khan and his Empire in the 13th century had its roots in the historical, political and social structure of nomadic peoples of Inner Asia. Chinggis Khan exemplified adaptation to the changing pattern of Steppe society. His policies in many ways were a reaction to the anarchy that had descended on the Steppe in the 11-12th centuries. He wanted to revive the Steppe Imperial tradition which had made it possible for the tribes in Inner Asia to compete with and threaten powerful and wealthy sedentary societies like China. Chinggis Khan's ambition and imposing personality provided him with the inner strength to carve out a position for himself as a leader of the tribes and revitalise the Steppe under one central authority. The politics and society in the Steppe at the time of his rise presented him with the environment crucial for his policies to be accepted by the majority of the tribes. Chinggis Khan from quite early on was supported by individuals and groups who like him had been treated badly by their tribes.[84] Members of tribes that willingly chose to ally with Chinggis initially were dissatisfied individuals who found themselves on the periphery of existent tribes. Chinggis Khan himself was an example of a dissatisfied member of a tribe that had betrayed him and left his family in their hour of need. He attracted followers not only because of his imposing figure but also because he promised them fair rewards in return, a rarity on the Steppe at the time. For example, he offered support to the two brothers from the former Khitan dynasty to fight against the Jurchid, for their help against his blood brother (*anda*) Jamugha; he also guaranteed safe trade routes to merchants that joined him from other tribes like the

[83] Holt, 1970, pp. 323-324.
[84] Togan, 1998, p.131.

Onggut.[85] Through the process of detribalisation he wanted to create a system of centralisation with himself as the supreme authority on the Steppe and beyond with the creation of a Mongol World Empire. At the time of Chinggis Khan's death he nominated his third son, Ogedei (1229-1241), his successor and divided his domains between his four sons.

Ogedei's reign signalled the entrenchment of the ideals of the Mongol World Empire and world conquest was begun in earnest. An interest in Hindustan was also seen as part of this ideology. Ogedei launched a campaign of expansion which included troop build-up in Hindustan/Kashmir beginning in 1229.[86] By 1241 the Mongols had occupied Lahore situated at the Delhi Sultanate frontier, albeit for a short period of time.[87] As in the case of the Delhi Sultanate after the death of Iltutmysh, the death of Ogedei ignited conflict within the Chinggissid Mongols between Jochi's son, Batu, the ruler of the Golden Horde and the Ogedeids. But, Ogedei's son, Guyug ascended the throne instead although only for two years and his early death left behind a far more unstable Mongol empire. Political machinations on the steppe brought the Toluids into power with Mongke, Tolui's eldest son, who became Qa'an with the help of his mother, Sorkokteni, and his cousin, Batu.[88] With the accession of the Toluid branch of the family, the Ogedeis and the Chaghatais were marginalised and the Ogedeis were deprived of most of their inheritance until the rise of Qaidu, Ogedei's grandson, in the late 1260s.

Mongke (1251-59) initiated conquest of the Middle East and China by sending his brothers, Hulegu and Qubilai, to these regions respectively.[89] Mongke's eight years reign ended igniting a civil war in the Mongol Empire. After his death Tolui's other sons Qubilai and Arigh Boke vied for the throne and the other princes of the Mongol *uluses* supported one or the other candidate.[90] The civil war of 1260 divided Chinggis' empire into four powerful households, the Yuan in China, the Ilkhans[91] in Persia, the Golden Horde in Russia and the descendants of Chaghatai and Ogedei in Central

[85] Ratchnevsky, 1993, p.72.
[86] Rashid al-Din, 1957, p. 975.
[87] Wink, 2001, p. 239.
[88] Leader of the Golden Horde.
[89] Rashid al-Din, 1957, pp. 974-975.
[90] Ibid., pp. 70-71.
[91] Ilkhan translates as Subordinate (Il) Khan to the Grand Qa'an.

Asia. Even though Arigh Boke's rebellion was put down in 1264, Qubilai only managed to secure nominal allegiance from the other Mongol rulers and within the next six years there was another coalition formed against him. In 1271 Qaidu was voted the leader of the Ogedeids and in 1282 Qaidu appointed Duwa the leader of the Chaghataids.[92] These appointments challenged any authority the great Qa'an, Qubilai, had over Central Asia.

The Ilkhans and the Central Asian Mongols were the source of Mongol invasions in Hindustan in the 13th century. More importantly, the neo-Muslim Mongols who converted to Islam and stayed in Hindustan were led by Abdullah, thought to be a descendant of Hulegu by Barni. Since then scholarship on the neo-Muslim Mongols has traced them to the Chaghataids in the works of Jackson and Aubin. This calls for a discussion on some aspects of the Ilkhans and the Central Asian Mongols.

Ilkhans-

Hulegu was sent to Iran, Iraq by Mongke, to remove the authority of the Caliph in Baghdad and extend authority over the infamous *hashashins* operating in North Eastern Iran.[93] Whether it was part of the mandate or not, Hulegu's successful campaigns culminated in the establishment of the Ilkhanate in Iran and Iraq in 1258. This proved to be the beginning of a long and continuous struggle between the Ilkhans and the Golden Horde which lasted well into the 14th century. Hulegu in setting up his dominions in Persia had intruded on the dominions under the control of the Golden Horde. Furthermore, in 1260, Berke of the Golden Horde supported Arigh Boke while Hulegu supported Qubilai in the struggle for the Qa'anate.[94] This inter-Mongol conflict also exhibited itself in the Mamluk-Ilkhan rivalry that began in 1260 with the battle of Ayn Jalut which marked the beginning of their fifty years struggle in which the Ilkhans did not prove successful. The rulers of the Mamluks sought successful alliances with the Golden Horde rulers against the Ilkhans on numerous occasions. For Hindustan, this period saw almost annual raids from the Mongols, especially the Qaraunas and/or the Neguderis from Southern Afghanistan into the North West

[92] Biran, 1997, p. 37.
[93] Rashid al-Din, 1994, p. 974.
[94] Ibid., p. 70-71.

frontier region, Punjab.[95] By the 1270s the Ilkhans also came into conflict with the Central Asian Mongols who had coalesced under the leadership of Qaidu. This conflict was to prove important for Hindustan because the Central Asian Mongols managed to bring parts of Ilkhan territory into their domain and by the late 1290s took on the mantle of Mongol invasions into the Delhi Sultanate.

Central Asian Mongols-

As mentioned previously with the accession of the descendants of Tolui, the descendants of Ogedei had been marginalised and deprived of their position in the Mongol World Empire. Ogedei's grandson, Qaidu, challenged the status quo and managed to re-establish the Ogedeis with the help of the Chaghatais, who had also suffered at the hands of the Toluids. In 1271 Qaidu represented the Chaghatai and Ogedei princes in Central Asia and posed a serious threat to the central authority of the Qa'an.[96] Qaidu not only challenged the authority of Qubilai by setting up independent control in Central Asia but he also continuously made incursions into Ilkhan territory (Khurasan and parts of Eastern Iran). Qaidu and Duwa (Chaghatai Prince) jointly ruled Central Asia and by the 1290s were increasingly encroaching into Khurasan and Afghanistan.[97] The command of the Qaraunas in Afghanistan passed into the hands of Duwa who appointed his son, Qutlugh Khwaja, as their leader in 1298.[98] Significantly, for a decade after 1298 the Mongol invasions on Hindustan were initiated only by the Central Asian Mongols and they were defeated and turned back each time.[99]

The conquest of Hindustan passed from the Ilkhans to the Central Asian Mongols but with little success, in some ways even lesser under the Chaghatais than the Ilkhans. Chapter three examines a number of possible reasons for the interest of Central Asian Mongols with regards to the Delhi Sultanate. Consequently, this brings us to the access to Hindustan through two specific regions, namely Punjab and Kashmir.

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95 Rashid al-Din, 1994, p. 975; Jackson, 1999, p. 117.
96 Jackson, 1999, p. 110.
97 Biran, 1997, p. 61.
98 Wassaf, 1967, p. 218.
99 Rashid al-Din, 1994, pp. 757-758.

Contact Zone-

Neither the Ilkhans nor the Central Asian Mongols managed to succeed in the conquest of Delhi, however, they were both in the vicinity of the Delhi Sultanate, especially the Punjab and Kashmir for a large part of the second half of the 13th century. Significantly, in both territories the Ilkhans ruled through vassals. The Mongols were in possession of the region between Ghazna and Hind beginning with Hulegu, Neguder, Nawruz and followed by Duwa's sons as leaders of the Qaraunas. While Afghanistan passed into the hands of the Central Asian Mongols, Punjab remained overwhelmingly a flexible border at times in the hands of the Mongols and at others reinvested by the Delhi Sultanate rulers. Other than military contact the Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate maintained trade and religious contact in the regions of Punjab and Kashmir as well. The presence of the Mongols particularly in Punjab serves the essential purpose of setting up the argument for Mongol interest in Hindustan.

Punjab-

Beginning with the Ghaznavids and followed by the Mongols, the control of Afghanistan removed the bulwark of Hindustan's outer defences and made it accessible for conquest through Punjab. Whether it was the Ghaznavids or the Mongols (Ilkhans and the Central Asians) and later even Amir Timur, they entered Hindustan via upper Sind through the Gomal Pass. The first point of contact throughout the 13th century remained Multan and Uch in Punjab. The entry point into Hindustan from the west was restricted through the Punjab, land of five rivers (*panj ab*), located between the Aravali Hills and the Siwalik Range. It offered a narrow strip of approximately 100 miles for invaders to ingress into Hind where it separates from the Gangetic plain.[100] Not only did Punjab serve as an entry point, it was also one of the most fertile tracts of land in Hindustan (and remains so in modern-day India).[101] It seems a logical assumption to make then that Mongol control over Punjab along with Gujarat and the Ganges Valley which had the propensity to sustain dense populations and could also secure rulers a steady supply of horses would have been the natural abode for the conquest of Hindustan.[102]

[100] Habibullah, 1945, pp. 49-51.
[101] Akbar, 1948, p. 14.
[102] Chandra, 1999, p. 87.

Not surprisingly, when the Khwarezm Shah fled to Hindustan in 1221 Chinggis Khan encamped in Sind.[103] Chinggis Khan's commanders laid siege to Nandana and also launched an unsuccessful campaign against Multan.[104] In 1248, the Mongol Commander, Sali Noyan, led his forces against Hindustan[105] which included the Qaraunas (Mongol troops) based in Qunduz and Baghlan (according to Manz these were the Neguderis).[106] Between 1241 and 1259, parts of Hindustan i.e., Lahore, Jalandar, Multan, and Upper Sind, became vassal states of the Mongols. By 1257, the Ilkhan Mongols had established control in Multan and Uch and with the help of the Qarlugh Empire situated between Ghazna and Hind, Balban forged a pact with Hulegu.[107] In 1260 Hulegu's emissaries were welcomed by the Delhi Sultan and given honours in court.[108] Hulegu commanded Punjab through a client ruler and Balban did not interfere in that region until after Hulegu died in 1265. After which Balban managed to regain Lahore, Jalandar, Multan and Uch and brought them under Delhi Sultanate rule again because Balban's cousin Sher Khan is referred to as governor of Lahore, Sanam, Debalpur kept the Mongols at bay but his death renewed threats further inland.[109] Balban's favourite son was then made governor of Lahore, Multan and Debalpur, Muhammad Shah, and perished in one of the Mongol attacks on Multan in 1285.[110] Beginning in the late 1280s the Ilkhan-Central Asian Mongol conflict also gained momentum and played itself out in trying to gain control over the Neguderis, Mongol soldiers, who were based on the border of Hindustan.[111] In 1291 Qaidu tried to extend influence over the Neguderis in Afghanistan but it seems that Nawruz, the Ilkhanid commander of the forces, after briefly allying with Qaidu, renewed allegiance with the Ilkhans in 1294.[112] The onus of Mongol raids after 1298 and with the installation of Duwa's son as the leader of the Qaraunas/Neguderis passed into the hands of the Central Asian Mongols. The cities of Punjab continued to be central and the gateway for the attacks by the Mongols in the 1290s and also in the

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103 Rashid al-Din, 1994, p. 577.
104 Jackson, 1999, p. 34.
105 Ibid., p. 111.
106 Manz, 1989, p. 160.
107 Wink, 2001, pp. 200-201.
108 Nizami, 2003, pp. 122-123.
109 Firishta, 1864-1865, p. 65.
110 Wink, 2001, pp. 206-207.
111 Jackson, 1999, p. 119.
112 Ibid., pp. 217-218.

14th century. Multan, Uch, Lahore, Siwistan and eventually Delhi formed the targets of the Central Asian Mongols. [113] Mongols were not only interested in Punjab but also looked more north towards Kashmir. The Ilkhans in particular were keenly interested in Kashmir and established indirect control over the kingdom in the second half of the 13th century.

Kashmir-

While Punjab remained the point of contact for Mongol forces, Ilkhan and Chaghatai, launching invasions into Hindustan, Kashmir was also attacked and subjugated by the Ilkhans. Kashmir offers itself as an example of a Mongol vassal state in Hindustan in the 13th century which bears resonance with my concluding remarks. It was under the governorship of a Mongol representative in Ogedei's reign. It must have been reclaimed by the kings of Kashmir soon after because it had to be brought back under control in the time of Lakshmandeva after the invasion of Sali Noyan in 1246 with the help of Mongke and Hulegu.[114] Rashid al-Din goes as far as including Kashmir as part of the Ilkhan realm between 1273 and 1301.[115] Significantly, he also links the Mongols to the dynasties of India in the *Jami 'al Tawarikh*.[116]

According to Jahn, Kashmir was intimately connected with Hulegu and Iran.[117] Rashid al-Din gives a description of Kashmiri Buddhism which was popular among the Ilkhans as opposed to the Tibetan form of Buddhism which was practiced in Qubilai's court in China. Buddhist priests from India in the Ilkhanate court are mentioned in historical sources of both India and Iran of the time. Arghun Khan (1284-1291), a practicing Buddhist) brought many Indian Buddhist priests to Iran.[118] There is a story in which it is reported that Arghun's death was caused by a treatment administered to him by an 'Indian yogi'.[119] There is also mention of a Kashmiri Buddhist named Kamalashri who is supposed to have helped Rashid al-Din draft the chapter on his History of India in *Jami 'al Tawarikh* and his treatises on Buddhism.[120]

[113] Briggs, 1908, p. 326.
[114] Jahn, 1965, p. xxxviii.
[115] Prakash, 1970, p. 16.
[116] Jahn, 1965, pp. 1xxvii-1xxxvi.
[117] Jahn, 1965, p. xci.
[118] Rashid al-Din, 1994, p. 373.
[119] Jackson, 1987, p. 404.
[120] Hasan, 1983, p. 17.

In addition to the content of Rashid al-Din's History of India, there are also illustrations which include numerous prints depicting the topography of India in addition to Indian mythological gods and goddesses. There is a whole section of miniatures that represent the Buddha in different forms.[121]

As is clear from the above account, although the Mongols did not dislodge Delhi Sultanate sovereignty in Hindustan-proper, contact between the Mongols and Hindustan lasted throughout the 13th and 14th centuries and it is impossible to view this time period without giving due emphasis to the Mongols who had established themselves in Northern China, Central Asia, Iran, Iraq, and Russia by the middle of the 13th century. Furthermore, the late 1290s saw a culmination of an interest in the conquest of Hindustan. The next chapter focuses on this Central Asian bid to conquer Hindustan.

[121] Gray, 1976, pp.30-32.

Mongols on the road to Delhi

Military contact between the Mongols and Hindustan lasted well over a hundred years and threatened the sovereignty of the Delhi Sultanate repeatedly in the 13th-14th centuries. As we have seen the frontier regions of Northern Hindustan, namely Sind, Multan and Lahore, were the battlegrounds of numerous military engagements, but by the end of the 13th century Central Asian Mongols had their eyes set on Delhi. Contemporary historians of the Delhi Sultanate leave no doubt that the Mongols wanted to conquer Hindustan and that the mighty '*Muslim'* armies of the Delhi Sultanate defeated and kept the '*infidel'* Mongol armies at bay in this prolonged struggle.[122] References to the threat of the Mongols (Ilkhans and Chaghatais) appear frequently and throughout the chronicles of Amir Khusrau and Barni, and it is important to point out that for Delhi the Mongol threat was a matter of survival, much like the case of the Mamluks who have left accounts about the Ilkhan threat for the same reason.[123] The military engagements themselves have been described in detail and even though the Mongol army returned each time, and the Sultanate army celebrated the 'victories', as we shall see there is a sense of divine intervention that is invoked each time along with an underlying feeling of surprise at the outcome.

The paucity of sources left us from the Chaghati Mongols leave us to speculate on the real intentions of the Central Asian Mongols with regards to Hindustan but with the help of Ilkhan sources in conjunction with the Indian sources we have enough evidence to prove that the Chaghatais did attack Hindustan repeatedly and that Duwa had an overwhelming interest in expanding into the territories of Hindustan.[124] In the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, Barni reports the fears of his uncle, the *Kotwal* of Delhi, who unequivocally brings up images of Chinggis Khan and rivers of blood signifying the spectre of fear that the Mongols represented to the autonomy of Muslim Hindustan. Barni through his uncle's speeches evokes images of other powerful Muslim cities, Baghdad, Bukhara, Samarkand etc, that the Mongols swiftly destroyed in their bid to conquer the world to point out the intense vulnerability of Delhi.[125]

[122] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 250. See also Rashid al-Din, 1994, pp. 757-758.
[123] Amitai, 1995, p. 138.
[124] Wassaf, 1967, p. 268.
[125] Elliot & Dowson, 1963, pp. 81-82.

As we have seen Wassaf, Qashani, Barni and Amir Khusrau have left accounts of the powerful rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, particularly, Ala al-Din Khalji, who successfully repelled Mongol attacks year on year. Contrary to the historians of the Delhi Sultanate, modern historians have propagated the general view that Mongol interest in Hindustan was not one of conquest but rather was restricted to raiding and booty. Nonetheless historians like Jackson, Wink and Majumdar, stress that the late 1290s saw an intensification of Central Asian Mongol invasions deep into Sind and Hind. We shall see that the Delhi Sultanate armies proved able to resist and repeatedly defeat the Central Asian Mongols whose intention was the conquest of Delhi, the seat of power in Northern Hindustan.

This chapter first summarises the battles fought between the Delhi Sultans and the Mongols for two decades beginning in 1287 through to 1308 and ends with a discussion of the reasons for the defeat of the Central Asian Mongols in Hindustan. Indian historiography, between Barni and Amir Khusrau, is replete with accounts of nearly all the military engagements in this period. The majority of the attacks in this period came from the armies of Duwa with the exception of the battle of 1287 which only refers to the invading force as Mongols. Wassaf and Qashani have also supplied details of the battles of 1299 and 1303 which by all accounts were the most threatening conquests undertaken against Hindustan.[126]

Mongol military action against Hindustan took on a more sustained character in the late 1270s and the 1280s and reached its peak between 1296 and 1308. The Delhi Sultanate was attacked in 1287, 1292, 1298, 1299-1300, 1301, 1303, 1305 and 1307-08. The Mongols attacked Lahore in Kayqubad's reign and were defeated by Bekbars and Khan Jehan and a large number of prisoners were brought to Delhi[127] in 1287. They were subsequently executed and the commanders of the Delhi army were given high honours.[128] In 1292 Jalal al-Din battled with the Mongols at Bar-Ram and Barni describes them as the forces of the descendants of Hulegu numbering 100,000 horses

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[126] Qashani, 1969, p. 193, p. 201; Wassaf, 1967, p. 189.

[127] Barni 1860-1862, p. 134; Briggs, 1908, p. 275, The exact year has not been given either by Barni or Firishta both mention this invasion. This was also the time when Kayqubad's chief minister uses this invasion to persuade Kayqubad to have the Mongol *amirs* in Delhi murdered.

[128] Jackson, 1986, p. 18.

(10 tumen) under the command of Prince Alghu and ‘Abdullah.[129] According to Jackson, ‘Abdullah, the commander of the Mongol forces in 1292, was a Chaghataid prince.[130] The armies engaged in minor skirmishes and on the sixth day initiated a more head-on engagement where Jalal al-Din Khalji’s forces reportedly defeated the Mongols killing many commanders and imprisoned thousands of Mongols.[131] Jalal al-Din Khalji reportedly declared peace and allowed the bulk of the army to travel back. A portion of the army led by Prince Alghu Khan with 3000-4000 of the rank and file of the Mongol forces decided to voluntarily to remain in Hindustan.[132] According to Barni, “[Some] of their principal men [Mongols] remained in India, and received allowances and villages.”[133] A discussion of these Mongols referred to as neo-Muslims is in the subsequent chapter.

The military conflicts beginning in 1296 came from Central Asian Mongols and occurred in the reign of Ala al-Din Khalji. To shed light on the question of interest in Hindustan from Central Asian Mongols, Wassaf’s account of a peace embassy sent by Duwa in 1303-4 to the Yuan and to the Ilkhans in which Duwa explicitly lays claim to the territories of Sind and Hind convey his intentions.[134] The peace embassy sent by Duwa was a bid to end the strife that had engulfed the Mongol empire since 1260. Duwa’s rivalry with the Great Khan and the Ilkhans in light of the possibility of a more concerted alliance between the Yuan and the Ilkhans against the Central Asian Mongols[135] left him with Hindustan as possibly the only outlet for the expansion of his territories without interfering with either the Yuan or Ilkhan domains. To add to this the fact that Hindustan was famous for its riches and gold[136] which had increased with Ala al-Din’s campaigns on Hindu kingdoms in the south would have made it even more attractive to Duwa.[137] Furthermore the peace embassy called for a renewal of the expansion of the Mongol Empire and Hindustan on the border of Duwa’s territories would have been a natural addition.[138]

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[129] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 219.
[130] Jackson, 1999, p.118.
[131] Briggs, 1908, p. 302.
[132] Barni 1860-1862, p. 219.
[133] Elliot & Dowson, 1963, p. 58.
[134] Wassaf 1967, p. 268; Biran, 1997, p. 73.
[135] Biran, 1997, p. 73.
[136] See Jackson, 1999, pp. 193-209 citing Wassaf, Barni and Khusrau.
[137] Jackson, 1999, p. 237.
[138] Wassaf, 1967, p. 268.

The beginning of the spate of Central Asian Mongol invasions in Hindustan dates to 1296 when they attacked Multan, Sind and Lahore. This Mongol army of 100,000 horses strong entered Hindustan from the Sindh River.[139] Ala al-Din sent his commanders', Ulugh Khan and Zafar Khan, with a large army who met the Mongols in Jaran-Manjur which is thought to be the same as Jalandar.[140] In the battle that took place the Mongols lost 12,000 men, many among them were chiefs and commanders. Numerous men, women and children were taken prisoner and were executed soon after by Ulugh Khan.[141] Ala al-Din sent out public statements about the destruction caused to the Mongols and the capital was engulfed in celebrations.[142] This victory over the Central Asian Mongols began a series of successes that challenged the notion of the invincibility of the Mongols.

In 1298 the Mongols under the command of Saldi and his brother crossed into Siwistan.[143] This conflict happened when another part of Ala al-Din's army was in Gujarat with Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan in command. The fort of Siwistan was under the control of the Mongols when Zafar Khan arrived with a large army. The Mongol forces included women and children.[144] According to Barni, the Sultanate army besieged the fort with swords, javelins, spears and axes while being showered by arrows by the Central Asian Mongols. Significantly Zafar Khan is reported to have taken the fort without building redoubts, mounds, mines, or employing the use of *maghribe*, *manjaniks or balistas,* lean-to's, and ditches, implying that he did not use traditional siege methods but rather by a head-on engagement initiated by the Sultanate army.[145] Unfortunately Barni does not elaborate on the exact strategies and effectiveness of weapons. We know from accounts of the Sultanate army's siege tactics practiced against Rajput forts which were successfully taken and help make the case for the skilful siege tactics of the Sultanate army. The military leadership of Zafar Khan also indicates to his superior skills and why he would have been successful against the Central Asian Mongols. Zafar Khan, was rewarded by Ala al-

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[139] Barni 1860-1862, p. 250.
[140] Ibid., p. 250.
[141] Briggs, 1908, pp. 326-327.
[142] Barni, 1860-1862 p. 250.
[143] Ibid., p. 253.
[144] Ibid., p. 253.
[145] Ibid., p. 254.

Din and was referred to as the *Rustam* (i.e. saviour/champion) of Hindustan.[146] This victory reportedly inspired awe among the Mongols for Zafar Khan and also led to jealousy among other commanders like Ulugh Khan and Ala al-Din himself because of the prominence and popularity it bestowed on him.[147]

The next military engagement has gone down in history as the most threatening assault on Hindustan from the Central Asian Mongols. The 'Battle of Kili' of 1298-99 has been described as the biggest military engagement between Hindustan and the Central Asian Mongols led by Qutlugh Khwaja (eldest son of Duwa Khan).[148] According to Barni and Firishta, Qutlugh Khwaja came to Hindustan with the intention of conquering all of Hindustan. Qashani in his account also corroborates the intention of Qutlugh Khwaja to conquer Delhi.[149] Furthermore, Qutlugh Khwaja's Mongols did not ravage or pillage any of the villages. He brought with him a force of 200,000 horses (20 *tumens*) crossed the Indus and successfully penetrated all the way up to the outskirts of Delhi[150] after successfully pushing back Zafar Khan's army at the River Jumna. Delhi became flooded with inhabitants from neighbouring areas due to the approach of the Mongol army and a situation of famine and overcrowding arose in the markets, mosques and streets of the capital.[151] Ala al-Din Khalji after a war council meeting with his advisors, who advised him not to fight the Mongols, marched out to give battle with 300,000 horses and 2700 elephants. We have to exercise a degree of caution when reading the accounts of medieval court historians who reportedly exaggerated the numerical strength of the armies on both sides. The Delhi Sultanate historians are no exceptions, thus the numbers are scaled down to help make the reported figures more realistic.[152]

Following the accounts of Barni, Qashani and Wassaf, modern historians like Martin confirm the expansive scope of the battle of Kili (1299) though not nearly with such big armies. He asserts that there were more likely around 50-60,000 horsemen under Qutlugh Khwaja and about 70,000 horsemen and 700 elephants under the command

[146] Barni,1860-1862, p. 254.
[147] Ibid., p. 254; Elliot & Dowson, 1963, pp. 76-77.
[148] Wassaf, 1967, p. 189.
[149] Qashani, 1991, pp. 190-192.
[150] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 254.
[151] Ibid., p. 259.
[152] Martin, 1950.

of Ala al-Din Khalji.[153] Thus both sides were approximately numerically of equal strength. Ala al-Din's army took battle positions in Kili with the Sultan leading at the centre, Zafar Khan at the head of the right wing, and Ulugh Khan in command of the left wing.[154] This battle formation was common among the Mongols as well. Zafar Khan initiated the first attack with swords and inflicted the first big blow to turn the Mongols' left flank. Characteristically, the Mongols feigned a retreat and Zafar Khan fell into the trap of following them for a distance of eighteen *kos* before he was encircled with the help of the scouts of Turghay who was at the head of a *tumen* which was stationed on tree tops.[155] Internal rivalries and jealousies mentioned above led to a lack of support for Zafar Khan. Nonetheless Zafar Khan fought bravely and impressed Qutlugh Khwaja so much that he offered him employment in the Mongol forces and a promise to make him *Badshah* (Sultan) of Delhi.[156] Zafar Khan reportedly refused the offer and subsequently was killed by a barrage of Mongol arrows. Zafar Khan, his *tumen*, elephants and elephant drivers were all killed in the attack.[157] The Mongols decidedly had the advantage at this point but retreated for 30 *kos* and another 20 *kos* that night until they reached the confines of their own territory.[158]

The defeat at the battle of Kili did not signify an end to Mongol invasions from Central Asia and 1303 saw another severely threatening invasion under Turghay who arrived with 120,000 horses (12 *tumen*) and encamped at the River Jumna.[159] Ala al-Din had just returned from Chittor[160] having suffered losses while most of the army was still continuing a siege in Telingana.[161] The Mongols took control of the roads, halted supplies of grain and fuel entering the city and choked supply lines to ensure no troops could come to Ala al-Din's aid.[162] After marching into Siri the Sultanate army remained entrenched for two months and built fortifications to stop the Mongols from making further inroads. Ala al-Din's army was entrenched with five fully armed

153 Martin, 1950, p. 38.
154 Briggs, 1908, p. 330.
155 Barni, 1860-1862, p. 260.
156 Ibid., p. 261.
157 Ibid., p. 261.
158 Qashani,, 1991, p. 192; Briggs, 1908, pp. 331-332; Also see Elliot & Dowson, 1963, pp. 77-79.
159 Barni, 1860-1862, p. 299.
160 Khusrau, 1953, p. 60.
161 Barni, 1860-1862, p. 299.
162 Ibid., p. 300.

elephants and a body of infantry to support them in every position.[163] The armies met on the battlefield on at least two occasions but neither side gained an advantage. Barni reports that the stalemate tested the patience of Turghay and he returned back with his army after two months.[164] It is also reported that had Turghay decided to remain longer it would probably have spelled disaster for Ala al-Din Khalji and the Delhi Sultanate.[165] According to Firishta, Ala al-Din appealed to Nizam al-Din Auliya (Sufi saint of Delhi) for help and the Mongol army retreated and Delhi was saved.[166] Barni and Firishta's accounts preclude the possibility of a military victory. However, miracles aside the forces of the Sultanate had a clear advantage over the invading Central Asian Mongols because they were on their own territory and could remain entrenched until the Mongols found a way to break through. Additionally, the Central Asian Mongols were not very good at siege warfare discussed later and this would have helped Ala al-Din's forces to resist them. Also, according to Barni, since Turghay invaded Hindustan in the winter,[167] two months into the stand off the short winter in the Delhi plains would have begun to slide into warmer weather making it difficult for the Central Asian Mongols and thus adding to the advantage enjoyed by the Delhi Sultanate on their home turf. This also did not mean that the Central Asian Mongols stopped invading Hindustan because they were soon in Punjab again.

Three more invasions followed in quick succession and Amir Khusrau actually refers to them as one long extended campaign.[168] They started with the invasions of Punjab under the command of Ali Beg and Tartaq. The Mongol command numbered 40,000 (or 50,000)[169] horses and penetrated into Amroha.[170] The Central Asian Mongols were defeated by Tughlaq Khan (a general under Ala al-Din) and 7000 Mongols were wounded and/or killed. Ali Beg and Tartaq were trampled under the feet of elephants in Delhi.[171] According to Khusrau, the princes were allowed to live, even though one of them died soon after he reached Delhi.[172] In 1305, Duwa launched another attack,

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[163] Barni, 1860-1862, pp. 300-301.
[164] Ibid., p. 301.
[165] Elliot & Dowson, 1963, pp. 102-104.
[166] Briggs, 1908, pp. 354-355.
[167] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 300.
[168] Khusrau, 1953, p.16.
[169] Khusrau, 1953, pp. 91-92.
[170] Briggs, 1908, p. 361.
[171] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 320. Also see, Briggs, 1908, p. 361.
[172] Khusrau, 1953, p. 92.

this time in Multan, allegedly to take revenge for the death of Ali Beg and Tartaq. The Central Asian Mongols proceeded to Sewalik where Malik Beg Tughlaq waited for the Mongol army under the command of Kubek (*Kebek*)[173] and defeated them there.[174] According to Amir Khusrau, Kubek was soon followed by Chaghatai commanders Iqbal and Taibu and the description of the battle includes strewn heads, hands and feet in the river that had turned red from the blood of the Mongols.[175] Kubek was taken prisoner and executed, trampled under elephants. Also, a pillar of Mongol skulls is said to have been constructed in front of the Badaun Gate in Delhi.[176] Along with the Mongol prisoners, 20,000 Mongol horses were taken into the Sultanate stables.[177]

1307-1308 saw yet another invasion under the Central Asian commander Iqbalmund,[178] who was defeated by Ghazi Malik (the future monarch, Ghias al-Din Tughlaq) and with this the spate of attacks in Ala al-Din's reign came to an end. Thousands of prisoners were sent to Delhi and most of them were executed.[179] Internal conflict in Central Asia with the death of Duwa Khan in 1307 is largely responsible for the cessation of Mongol attacks since Duwa was the driver of these attacks from what we have seen.[180] After a gap of 16 years and under a new ruling house, the Tughlaqs, Hindustan saw renewed Mongol invasions from Central Asia under Tarmashirin.

Ala al-Din's successes against the Mongols do not come across as a 'shining' example of destroying the myth of the invincibility of the Mongols as clearly as in the case of say the Mamluk victories over the Ilkhans. In part this is because historians preferred to call Delhi's victories a consequence of divine intervention rather than Ala al-Din and his commanders' military strategies and this has passed into modern historiography. Contemporary writers like Amir Khusrau and Barni ascribed Ala al-Din's respect for the Sufi saint Nizam al-Din Auliya as the reason for the survival of

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173 Khusrau, 1953, p. 43.
174 Briggs, 1908, p. 364.
175 Khusrau, 1953, p. 44.
176 Barni, 1860-1862, p. 321.
177 Elliot & Dowson, 1963, p. 112.
178 The name appears as Iqlamabad in *Tarikh-i Firishta*. Briggs, 1908, p. 364.
179 Briggs, 1908, p. 364.
180 Wassaf, 1967, p. 293.

the Delhi Sultanate especially in the battle of Kili (1299) and also Turghay's invasion in 1303. The author of the Tabaqat-i Akbari, Khwaja Nizam al-Din Ahmad, also calls them nothing short of miracles.[181] Later day historians like Firishta do not offer any more information than what is supplied by Barni. While Wassaf and Qashani furnish us with short descriptive accounts of the battles between the Central Asian Mongols and Ala al-Din Khalji, they do not provide us with direct evidence of strategies used in these battles that may help convince us of either Ala al-Din's superior skill as a military commander nor of the weaknesses of the Mongol commanders.

Other more compelling reasons have also been offered for the return of the Mongols even when they decidedly had the advantage. In the formidable battle of Kili the most accepted reason for the withdrawal of the Mongol army is attributed to the wounded Qutlugh Khwaja while Turghay's return was a consequence of losing patience with Ala al-Din for his army's perseverance. While these are of course important, the fact that Ala al-Din was victorious against the Central Asian Mongols cannot be forgotten though it often falls prey to being marginalised. Furthermore Biran presents us with an alternative explanation which points to the weakness of the Chaghatai siege tactics used extensively in the conquest of Hindustan. In other campaigns, like in Qara Qocho and Kusui, Duwa and his army were unable to take the forts using either catapults or fire throwers. The siege of Kusui involved 120,000 horses and 12 catapults to breach the fort but even with the help of a constant volley of arrows and catapults the fort was not breached by the Chaghatai army.[182] That the Central Asian Mongols were not successful in Delhi who were also probably using similar if not these same tactics then is not that surprising.

Not only that but another still partial answer to the successes under Ala al-Din Khalji may lie in the military organisation of the Delhi Sultanate which had similarities with the Mongol army. Military historians have given detailed descriptions and comparisons of the Mongol and the Delhi Sultanate armies. There is evidence to show that the Delhi Sultanate army was modelled on the Turkish-Mongol model of steppe armies. The Delhi Sultanate and the Mongol armies thus shared many similar features or in the very least Delhi Sultans were familiar with Mongol modes of warfare. "The

[181] De, 1940, p. 181.
[182] Biran, 1997, pp. 89-90.

Mongol army as well as the Turkish host [Delhi Sultanate] was essentially an army of rude and vigorous horsemen of the steppes of Central Asia, carrying the same arms – javelins, hook, bows and arrows and swords."[183] Rulers of the Delhi Sultanate used hunting exercises to keep their army in fighting condition without sending them too far away from the capital in case of an attack. Hulegu is said to have been impressed on hearing of Balban's hunting expeditions and declared him a shrewd ruler for following this strategy which the Mongols used as well.[184] The Delhi Sultanate army also used the decimal system like the Mongol army. Amir Khusrau used the term *tumen* for a contingent of 10,000 for the Delhi Sultanate army.[185] The practice of consultation during war was common among Mongols and Turks of Central Asia, and continued in the Delhi Sultanate.[186] Other features like depending on an efficient postal system and employment of spies which helped to collect information of the opposing armies and contain or tailor information that leaked out about the Imperial army were also characteristics that the Mongol and the Delhi Sultanate armies shared. The descriptions of siege tactics that the Delhi Sultanate and Chaghatai armies employed also provide a basis for comparison. Both armies used *maghribes*, *manjaniks* and lean-to's but unlike the case of the Chaghatais in Delhi and Kusui, Ala al-Din was successful in besieging forts (Ranthambhore, Jalor, Siwana) in Rajasthan on numerous occasions. The structure of the army may help explain why even seemingly weak Sultans like Kayqubad and Jalal al-Din Khalji were also successful against the Mongols, because as is well known, the advantage that the Mongols had was this novelty of military strategies which would not have been as stark when fighting with Delhi.[187]

It is useful to extend the discussion even further by drawing attention to the fact that the Delhi Sultanate army, as also the state itself, had parallels with the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria. Not to overstate the case of these similarities but there are some basic principles which afford a comparison. The Mamluks as the most successful opponents of the Mongols survived a sustained level of Ilkhan conquests and thus provide an appropriate reference point to compare with the Delhi Sultanate

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[183] Sarkar, 1984, p. 58, p. 115.
[184] Kulkarni, 1990, p. 107.
[185] Sarkar, 1984, p. 75.
[186] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 254; Sarkar, 1984, p. 68, p. 75.
[187] Ikram, 1966, p. 63; Jackson, 1999, pp. 229-231.

army and its successes. The Mamluk army consisted of Turks from the steppe, *Dasht-i Qipchaq*, who were taken by the state at a very young age and trained to be soldiers. Their skills in archery and horseback riding have been cited as reasons for their successes against the Ilkhans.[188] They also used swords and lances which proved advantageous against the Ilkhans.[189] According to Indian historians, Zafar Khan, the Delhi Sultanate commander, used mainly swords and employed hand to hand combat in the siege against the Central Asian Mongols who had besieged the fort of Siwistan in 1296. The Delhi Sultanate army like the Mamluk army must also have benefited from the influx of Mongol refugees after 1260.[190] The neo-Muslim Mongols held important positions in the military and Muslim and Sanskrit sources repeatedly point to their skilful archery. The Delhi Sultanate state would have known the tactics and strategies employed by the Mongols not only because of the similarities between the armies themselves but also because they had Mongol commanders in their employment. Thus, the strategies that they employed may have been a consequence of that shared background especially in response to a similar kind of threat.

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, Ala al-Din went to great lengths to keep Hindustan safe from Mongol invasions. Despite Ala al-Din's winning streak against the Mongols, the threat that they represented drove him to administer severe changes especially in 1303. Barni has described Ala al-Din as having woken up from his stupor and initiated policies of land reform, price control, prohibition of wine and drugs in order to centralise the state and help increase the size of the army.[191] Among these actions he seized property to add to the revenue of the state to pay increased numbers of soldiers, he set up an effective intelligence network, and he controlled interaction of the nobility amongst each other in order to limit alliances which had led to several coups.[192] He spent a lot of money on building and repairing fortifications in Delhi in areas vulnerable to Mongol threat. It is interesting to note that the precautions instituted by Ala al-Din to withstand the Mongol onslaught from Central Asia reverberate with the policies employed by the Mamluk Sultanate under Baybars I as

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188 Amitai, 1999, pp. 130-134.
189 Amitai, 1995, p. 215.
190 Ibid., p. 217.
191 Barni, 1860-1862, p. 302; See also, Jackson, 1999, p. 244.
192 Elliot & Dowson, 1963, pp. 92-95.

early as after the battle of Ayn Jalut (1260).[193] The Ilkhan-Mamluk wars in the second half of the 13th century are the most prominent examples of successfully preventing the expansion of the Mongol Empire. Baybars I reportedly enlarged and trained his army, installed fortifications, expanded the espionage system, created an efficient civilian administration and cultivated diplomatic relations with the Ilkhans and the Golden Horde. With the exception of this last practice of sending envoys to the Mongols, the Delhi Sultanate employed the same tactics nearly half a century later.[194]

In addition to the arguments made thus far the weather of Hindustan needs to be considered with regards to being a disadvantage for the Chaghatais. Just as in the case of the Mamluk-Ilkhan wars where the weather, specifically the hot summers, and its impact on pasturage and water necessary for Mongol horses had helped explain Ilkhan defeats in Syria, echoes even more so in the case for Hindustan. However as the arguments of Amitai suggest the weather could not be the determining factor for the Ilkhans because they mostly attacked in winter with the exception of the campaign in 1281.[195] Furthermore if that were the case then the Ilkhans were destined to send small armies to Syria in order to manage the problem of the supply of pasture and water in Syria which would guarantee their failure each time.[196] Thus, the argument for the adverse weather can only be pushed so far. In the case of Hindustan as well then the question of weather though important cannot be the determining factor for either a lack of interest or Chaghatai defeats.[197] Delhi Sultanate chroniclers do not supply us with the exact dates and seasons for most of the Chaghatai invasions but we know, for instance, that Turghay attacked Delhi in the winter season in 1303.[198] Additionally most of the battles fought between the Chaghatais and the Delhi Sultanate were near rivers (Jamuna, Sind, Indus) and in the vicinity of Punjab which is not an agricultural wasteland but rather as we have seen ecologically green and leads on to the Gangetic plain which is the most fertile region of Hindustan.[199]

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[193] Amitai, 1995, pp. 71-77.
[194] Amitai, 2007, pp. 359-360.
[195] Amitai, 1995, p. 228.
[196] Ibid., p. 226.
[197] Jackson, 1999, p. 106.
[198] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 300.
[199] Akbar, 1948, p. 14.

Ala al-Din's resistance went beyond just protecting his state from becoming part of the territory of the Central Asian Mongols. Ala al-Din not only built a centralised state with a bigger army but he also tested the resolve of the Mongols by treating prisoners of wars in the most horrible manner. There are accounts a plenty of severed Mongol heads on spikes paraded in Delhi since as early as 1287 under Kayqubad. Ala al-Din's reign is famous for its brutal treatment of Mongol prisoners, most of whom were executed by being trampled under the feet of elephants in view of the public. Amir Khusrau's descriptions of all the battles are gory and full of references to the numbers of strewn heads, hands and feet of the Mongols on the battlefield. The images that he evokes in his poems are that of the victorious armies of Islam over the *infidel* and *dirty* Mongols. Amir Khusrau and Barni inform us of various towers built of severed Mongol heads that were brought to Delhi after various battles and exhibited in the form of a wall that was built at Siri.[200] That one of the last campaigns against Hindustan has been attributed to the desire for revenge[201] for the awful treatment of Central Asian Mongols under Ala al-Din gives us a degree of confidence to be able to say that not only was Ala al-Din executing Mongols in these horrible ways but that the knowledge of the same was not by any means a secret but rather was known even among the Central Asian Mongols. This may explain in part why the Chaghatai Mongols kept on invading Hindustan.

While Wassaf's account shows how impressed he was with this Muslim king of the Delhi Sultanate who had successfully been defeating the Central Asian Mongols it is perhaps necessary to remember that the Chaghatais were not Muslim at the time. Also Wassaf was a chronicler under the Ilkhans who were in conflict with the Chaghatais. He naturally expresses more surprise at the treatment of Oljeitu's embassy which was massacred in Delhi and even reprimands Ala al-Din for taking such a bold step which put the Muslim population of his empire under threat of destruction by the Ilkhans. It goes without saying that Ala al-Din was as reckless with the Central Asian Mongols as he was with the Ilkhans.

Ala al-Din represented an independent and moreover rebellious Muslim state in close proximity to the Central Asian Mongols which in conjunction with the riches of

[200] Barni, 1860-1862*,* p. 321. Also see Khusrau, 1953, p. 17.
[201] Khusrau, 1953, pp. 16-17.

Hindustan and Duwa's desire for expansion make a strong case for Central Asian interest in the conquest of Hindustan. Whether Ala al-Din was foolhardy or confident is a point of speculation but it is clear from the accounts provided to us by contemporary and later historians that Ala al-Din's actions provoked both the Chaghatai and Ilkhan Mongols who couldn't cow down the rebellious Ala al-Din. Delhi remained out of the grasp of the Central Asian Mongols and in the hands of Ala al-Din.

In conclusion, we can safely say that the Ilkhans and the Chaghatai Mongols were heirs to the Ghurids and Ghaznavids in their desire for the conquest of Hindustan. The sustained attack by the Central Asian Mongols on Hindustan in the 1290s can be attributed to numerous reasons which range from Duwa's peace embassy which lays out quite clearly that he saw Hindustan as part of Chaghatai domains as decided by Chinggis Khan to possibly a desire for revenge as the Central Asian Mongols suffered at the hands of the Delhi Sultanate army. It is evident from the number of raids, the numerical strength of the armies and the strategies employed in invading Hindustan between 1295 and 1308 that the Chaghatai Mongols wanted to conquer the Delhi Sultanate. Thus, Central Asian Mongol interest in Hindustan itself cannot be denied and relegated to 'raids' and/or attacks that signify no real intention of conquering Delhi. Additionally, Oljeitu's embassy to the Delhi Sultanate expressed Ilkhan interest in the Delhi Sultanate as well but it also bore no fruit. The failure of the Chaghatai Mongols in their conquest of Hindustan is also as evident.

While it cannot be argued that the Central Asian Mongols were not beset by internal problems which caused distractions from the conquest of Hindustan, the Delhi Sultanate was also beset by political instability in the 1290s. Under these conditions, the military organisation and structure of the Delhi Sultanate needs to be emphasised further in discussing the failure of the Mongols to penetrate into Delhi. Furthermore the exemplary leadership of generals like Ala al-Din himself, Zafar Khan, Ulugh Khan and Malik Kafur[202] cannot be ignored especially when seen in conjunction with the fact that they were fighting for their continued existence. The Chaghatais proved less effective when they came up against Ala al-Din's ambitious and defensive Delhi

[202] Malik Kafur also called *Hazar Dinari* (1000 Dinars) was a slave commander of Ala al-Din.

Sultanate. In the end, the Chaghatais launched a protracted war against the Delhi Sultanate, a war which they lost.

Mongol or Muslim?

The discussion so far has focused on the external Mongol threat primarily from Central Asia on Hindustan in the 13th century. However, Mongol presence in Hindustan includes ethnic Mongols who were citizens of the Delhi Sultanate. Mongols began arriving in Delhi as prisoners of war or as refugees from the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanid realm after war broke out between Berke and Hulegu in the 1260s. These Mongols were referred to as 'neo-Muslims' (*nau-mussulmanan*) and infidels (*gaddhar-i kafir*) simultaneously in the Delhi Sultanate. As we shall see and these two terms suggest, they were not accepted either as true believers even though they were converts to Islam, nor as, full citizens of the Delhi Sultanate. Their 'Muslimness' seems to have been suspect, which might have been a convenient excuse for the fact that they were Mongols, akin to the biggest threat to the survival of the Delhi Sultanate. Simultaneously and in larger numbers the Mamluk Empire also saw Mongol immigration who were referred to as the '*wafidiya* or *musta'minun'* in Egypt. The first term refers to people coming from the outside and the latter term refers to people seeking security.[203] A comparison of these two groups of Mongols in Delhi and Egypt helps inform the following discussion which deals with Mongol presence and issues of identity in lands most threatened by the Mongol Empire. As we shall see the Wafidiya had similar experiences and suffered a similar fate to these neo-Muslims. This chapter sets out to develop the framework for discussing the importance of Mongol identity of the neo-Muslims in the Delhi Sultanate and explores their concerted *Mongol* effort at usurping the Delhi Sultanate throne.

The first wave of Mongol immigration into the Delhi Sultanate took place in the reign of Ghiyath al-Din Balban who ruled between 1266 and 1286. As mentioned in the introduction Balban changed the nature of the Slave dynasty of Delhi by cultivating a different support base from the Turkish *chihilganis*. Balban and his immediate successor, Kayqubad had a number of these neo-Muslim Mongols (Bayanchar, Ulagchi, Turumtai, Ja'urchi, *Turki) in the royal court in prestigious positions.[204] They lived in a neighbourhood of Delhi which was referred to as *'Muhalla Chingizi'*. There are references to inter-marriages between the Mongols and other powerful

[203] Ayalon, 1977, p. 92.

[204] Ulaghchi: Balban's chief armour-bearer of the left hand, *Turki: Kayqubad's 'arid, Ja'urchi: Kayqubad's sar-i jandar. Jackson, 1999, p. 81.

groups of the nobility at the Delhi court. They enjoyed powerful positions and exercised control on the Delhi court as part of a coalition which helped bring Kayqubad to power after Balban's death in 1286 which had sparked a bloody succession struggle.[205] According to nearly all historical accounts, Kayqubad was a young and weak ruler who allowed his court to be over-run by infighting and factions. Kayqubad's minister, Malik Nizam al-Din, managed to become the most powerful influence over the feeble monarch and plotted to get rid of all the *amirs* in the coalition who had control over the throne. He specifically raised the spectre of suspicion against these neo-Muslims by emphasising their being Mongol and thus connecting them with the ever-present threat of a Mongol invasion. The 1287 Mongol invasion of Punjab provided Nizam al-Din the occasion to get rid of these Mongol *amirs* by convincing the Sultan of evidence of collusion between the invading Mongols and the neo-Muslims at court and had the neo-Muslim Mongol chiefs murdered.[206] According to Barni, under Kayqubad most of the chiefs of the neo-Muslims, who he describes as being of a singular mind and body, were murdered and the rank and file were dispersed.[207] Along with the neo-Muslims, their allies from Balban's reign who were powerful nobles were also exiled.[208] However, this did not signify the end of the Mongols residing within Hindustan.

A second migration of Mongols was in 1291-92 under Jalal al-Din Khalji when he defeated an invading force from the Ilkhans commanded by Hulegu's descendants at the Sindh River according to Barni but more likely descendants of Chaghatai.[209] The Mongol prince *Alghu* or *Ulghu Khan,* the leader of the army, along with 4000 of his followers remained in Hindustan with the approval of Jalal al-Din Khalji and they converted to Islam. Unlike in Balban's reign these Mongols came as one group and specifically belonged to the Ilkhan army. Barni reports that *amirs* of 1000s and *amirs* of 100s read the *kalm'ah* and stayed in Hindustan with their women and children.[210] This group of Mongols were also settled in the suburbs of Delhi and referred to as neo-Muslims. Like the first group these Mongols also enjoyed a special status in court, so much so that Prince Alghu was given one of Jalal al-Din Khalji's daughters

[205] Jackson, 1999, p. 81.
[206] Khan, 1988, p. 113.
[207] Barni, 1860-1862, pp.132-134. Wink, 2001, p. 211.
[208] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 134.
[209] Jackson, 1999, p. 122.
[210] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 219.

in marriage.[211] They were rewarded with high offices and intermarried with the nobility in Delhi and were also called *'amiran-i jadida'*. They inhabited Jalal al-Din's new capital, Kilugahri, and surrounding areas of Indrapat and Ghiyaspur, *Muhalla Chingizi* and Mughalpur.[212] They proved loyal citizens and Prince Alghu even exposed a plot to overthrow Jalaladdin Khalji by Balban's left-over Turkish nobility that had been displaced by the Khalji revolution, thus saving the throne and the life of the Sultan.[213] We shall come back to the notion of loyalty and what implications it has for the neo-Muslims' self perception of being Mongol.

The neo-Muslims thus enjoyed a high degree of favour and respect under Jalal al-Din Khalji. However, the murder of Jalal al-Din and the usurpation of the throne by Ala al-Din signalled a change in their status in that they began to be viewed with suspicion. They were involved in numerous plots to overthrow Ala al-Din from the very beginning of his reign. Ala al-Din in his bid to get rid of those closest to Jalal al-Din had murdered not only the royal heirs but also blinded Prince Alghu Khan, Jalal al-Din's Mongol son-in-law. The active resistance of the neo-Muslims against the rule of Ala al-Din Khalji is reported in numerous assassination attempts, a mutiny and in their support of candidates opposed to Ala al-Din throughout his reign. Beginning in 1298 they posed a real problem for Ala al-Din by allying with his Rajput rivals.[214] However, nearly all the neo-Muslim attempts to overthrow Ala al-Din failed but they remained active opponents until their massacre in 1311.[215]

As mentioned previously, Hindustan saw a resurgence of Rajput resistance and a fresh drive towards subjugating all of Hindustan under Ala al-Din Khalji. Persian and Sanskrit sources in conjunction allow us to piece together not only the beginning of this Rajput resistance but also more importantly for this discussion, this unique Hindu-Mongol alliance against the Delhi Sultanate. The events unfold with the campaign of Gujarat. The Delhi Sultanate army under Ulugh Khan came into contact with Kanhadadeva, the ruler of Jalor, who refused to give the army passage through to Gujarat. Kanhadadeva's refusal was couched in terms of fear of rape and pillage of

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211 Majumdar, 1960, pp. 18-19.
212 Barni, 1860-1862, pp. 218-220.
213 Jackson, 1999, p. 83.
214 Barni, 1860-1862, p. 253.
215 Ibid., pp. 334-336.

the villages of Jalor by Sultanate soldiers, but more likely long-standing enmity with the Muslim rulers of Delhi was the real reason.[216] Also, in the early 1290s Jalal al-Din had launched a campaign against Jalor and the ruler of Gujarat had come to the rescue of Jalor.[217] Thus, Kanhadadeva's refusal can easily be interpreted as a way of returning that favour and standing up to the increased pressure from the Sultanate on the Rajput states to gain time for the ruler of Gujarat and for himself. Following which Ulugh Khan bypassed Jalor and successfully overran Gujarat only to return to Jalor to take revenge for Kanhadadeva's refusal and/or defiance. The Jalor army responded with an attack under Jaita Devada, while simultaneously a mutiny broke out under the leadership of the neo-Muslim Mongols in the Khalji army who were reportedly unhappy with their share of the booty from the Gujarat campaign.[218] As per Nainsi's account the neo-Muslim leaders namely Muhammad Shah and Yalchaq were implicated in having been in contact with Kanhadadeva's forces which makes this the first instance of a Hindu-Mongol alliance.[219]

The details of the mutiny of the neo-Muslims leaders and the rank and file can be found in the pages of the *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*. According to Barni, the neo-Muslim leaders entered the tent of Ulugh Khan to murder him but he had left his tent because of confusion in the camp. In the ensuing tumult the neo-Muslims ended up killing Ala al-Din's *amir-i hajjib*, who was also Nusrat Khan's[220] brother. In the meantime Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan managed to gather and unite the other soldiers and the neo-Muslims had to flee the camp. Despite delivering a blow to the Khalji army the rebellious Mongol leaders had to take refuge and they chose to do so with Delhi's formidable opponents, the Rajput Hindus kings (specifically Kanhadadeva and Hammir Deva).[221] Their flight to Hammir Deva of Ranthambhore is the second instance of a Hindu-Mongol alliance and forms the basis of the following discussion. In another version of this story, reported in the Sanskrit source, the neo-Muslims were driven out of Delhi because one of Ala al-Din's wives or concubines had expressed an amorous interest in the neo-Muslim leader, Muhammad Shah. This news reportedly

[216] Bakshi and Sharma, 2000, pp. 149-150.
[217] Srivastava, 1981, pp. 40-41.
[218] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 252. Also see Bakshi and Sharma, 2000, p. 150.
[219] Sharma, 1975, p. 183.
[220] Ala al-Din had three important military commanders namely Ulugh Khan, Nusrat Khan and Zafar Khan.
[221] Bakshi and Sharma, 2000, p. 150.

provoked Ala al-Din's ire and wrath and Muhammad Shah fled Delhi with his family and followers and took refuge with Hammir Deva.[222]

To continue with Barni's account, however, when the news of the mutiny reached Ala al-Din in Delhi, he had the families of the neo-Muslims in Delhi rounded up and tortured.[223] Barni goes on to add that even Nusrat Khan took revenge for his brother's death especially on the women of the neo-Muslims. Barni calls the attention of the reader to the novelty of these punishments and the fear that this caused among the general population.[224] Barni's earlier descriptions of these neo-Muslims are not flattering or sympathetic, especially when he describes their actions in the mutiny reprehensible and obscene.[225] However Barni's consternation at the treatment of the neo-Muslim Mongol families may point to his revulsion for their treatment as Muslims rather than Mongols.[226] As we have seen even in Barni's descriptions of the battles between the Mongols and the Delhi armies, he does not refrain from using gory images of dead Mongols with severed heads, hands and rivers of blood as the main motifs. Thus, this may be an indirect reference to the enigmatic position of the Mongols in the Delhi Sultanate as Muslim and Mongol simultaneously.

The next mention of the neo-Muslims is in Ranthambhore where their alliance with Hammir Deva leads to a direct confrontation with Ala al-Din. The leaders of the neo-Muslims, especially Muhammad Shah, played a key role in the ensuing conflict. The descriptions highlight the relationship which is based on unswerving loyalty on both the Mongol and the Rajput sides. Hammir Deva fought to keep the neo-Muslim Mongol leaders out of the hands of Ala al-Din Khalji and Muhammad Shah lost his life on the battlefield in a bid to save Ranthambhore.[227] In Amir Khusrau's description of the battle the neo-Muslims were described as shooting arrows at the enemy in a constant stream, indicating not just bravery but also their complete support for Ranthambhore.[228] These images are reminiscent of the characterisations of Mongols and Mongol armies with volleys of arrows forming the main body of the attack.

[222] Khema, 1999, pp. 96-97.
[223] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 253.
[224] Ibid., p. 253.
[225] Ibid., p. 253.
[226] Ibid., p. 253.
[227] Bakshi and Sharma, 2000, pp. 145-147.
[228] Khusrau, 1953, p. 18.

Significantly, they evoke singularly and typically Mongol images of the neo-Muslims in the Delhi chronicles.

This did not signify the end of the neo-Muslims either, nor their bid to remove Ala al-Din Khalji. The neo-Muslims had also been in involved in supporting other Sultanate contenders for power, for instance, Akat Khan[229] who challenged Ala al-Din for the throne.[230] Another planned assassination plot in 1310 against Ala al-Din in retaliation to his policies of 1303, discussed in the previous chapter, was discovered in 1311 and according to Barni, Ala al-Din ordered a massacre of all neo-Muslims, not just the conspirators but "the race of 'New Mussulmans' who had settled in his territories, [to] be destroyed… and that none of the stock should be left alive upon the face of the earth."[231] It must be pointed out that the Central Asian Mongols had stopped invading Hindustan by 1311 and Ala al-Din was fast consolidating his rule within Hindustan.

It is useful here to provide the parallel example of similar events in the Mamluk Empire which as has been seen was successful in resisting conquest from the Ilkhans. Migration out of the Mongol realm in the 1260s to the Mamluk Empire included various groups of Turkmen, Arabs, and Kurdish peoples along with a fairly large number of Mongols. We have more information regarding the Wafidiya than the neo-Muslims possibly because of the significantly larger migration into the Mamluk Empire. The first group of Wafidiya arrived in 1261 under Baybars I that included women and children and numbered two hundred. He concentrated them in the capital despite having sent other migrating Turcoman tribes away from the capital. Subsequently, in 1262 another thirteen hundred arrived and in 1263 several smaller groups arrived. Baybars I expressed some concern as the number of refugees grew and after Baybars I's death the immigration slackened and trickled down to a few hundreds until the reign of Al-'Adil Kitbugha, an ethnic Mongol, in 1295. According to various Arabic sources they numbered 10,000 and some others even report a number as high as 18,000 in Kitbugha's reign. Several small groups entered the

[229] Ala al-Din's nephew. Jackson, 1999, p. 173.
[230] Barni, 1860-1862, p. 273.
[231] Ibid., pp. 334-336. Elliot & Dowson, 1963, p. 120.

Mamluk state throughout the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad bin Qalawun but with his death in 1341 the waves of Wafidiya migration came to a stop.[232]

The Wafidiya were given titles of *Amirs* and given the status of freemen in the Mamluk state. The highest command given to them was that of *Amir* of Forty, thus indicating a relatively high status, but there were limitations to how high they could progress in the Empire. There is speculation on whether the limitation of their ranks was more a function of them being Mongols or freemen. As is well known the Mamluk system favoured slaves above freemen, however the Mongols enjoyed a fair degree of freedom which was not appreciated by other members of the Mamluk state. The ranks of the Wafidiya in the state also depended on the numbers of Mongols that came in the migration i.e., when the immigration was in large numbers the limit seems to have been the rank of Amir of Forty but in Muhammad bin Qalawun's time when the immigration numbered only a few hundreds the rank of Amir of Thousands was also seen. For the most part they were received with marked honours and,[233] there were also instances of integration and marriages between Mamluks and Mongol women.[234]

Akin to the neo-Muslims in the Delhi Sultanate, the Wafidiya also enjoyed powerful positions in court and thus were also involved in power struggles. When there was infighting in al-Nasir's court in 1293, al-'Adil Kitbugha, a Mongol-Wafidiya, who had been taken prisoner after the battle of Homs (1260) and placed in the service of Muhammad bin Qalawun, became Sultan of the Mamluk Empire (1294-1296).[235] al-'Adil Kitbugha's reign saw the highest proportions of Mongol-Wafidiyas immigration who quickly became his most trusted inner circle.[236] This policy spelled disaster for Kitbugha because the Wafidiya were Mongols from the Ilkhan realm thus they also represented a very real threat in popular imagination. Their arrival in Kitbugha's reign further caused problems because they entered at a time when famine broke out in Egypt. In Cairo Kitbugha's unpopularity reached such high levels that even the hardships caused by famine were linked with the rule of the untrustworthy Mongols

[232] Ayalon, 1977, pp. 90-102.
[233] Ibid., p. 100.
[234] Ibid., p. 100.
[235] Irwin, 1986, p. 70.
[236] Ibid., p. 91.

who were suspected of siphoning off grain and thus killing thousands of people.[237] Kitbugha succumbed because of these unpopular policies and machinations in court of his *na'ib al-salatana*, Lajin who emphasised the spectre of this Mongol threat.[238] Lajin (1297-1299) deposed Kitbugha and ascended the throne after which Mongols were removed from high office. However, they still remained important in the Mamluk *halqa* unit.[239] In 1299 Turghay (Oirat commander) was caught and executed in a bid to reinstate Kitbugha to the throne. Moreover, "[M]any [Mongols] were imprisoned and put to death."[240] The Wafidiya appeared again as they formed part of the coalition that brought al-Nasir back to power in 1309 but were quickly removed after he ascended the throne under pressure from his Royal Mamluks.[241] The Wafidiya quickly descended in the ranks of the Mamluk state until they were eventually only employed as servants and attendants. As is clear from the above discussion the Mongols represented at least two ways in which they were suspected of undermining the Mamluk Empire. Firstly, they were Mongol freemen and not slaves, thus provoking resentment by the Mamluk nobility and Mamluk freemen especially with Kitbugha favouring Mongol freemen and undermining the Bahri Mamluk state. Secondly, the Ilkhanids were still enemies of the Mamluks and they represented a constant and potentially deadly threat to the Mamluk establishment.

The accounts of the Wafidiya and the neo-Muslims echo each other and their involvement in succession struggles and the suspicion with which they were treated highlights how they were perceived as Mongols. That these two empires were formidable opponents that had resisted Mongol invasions is noteworthy. It is also important to point out that the rulers of the Mamluk Empire and the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate shared certain similarities. Without overstating the case,[242] they were both slave dynasties and in the case of Balban and Baybars I, were sold into slavery as a consequence of Mongol expansion. Mongol groups were welcomed by the rulers and acquired important positions in the state, especially in the military. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the inclusion of these Mongols in the militaries of the

[237] Irwin, 1986, p. 94.
[238] Ibid., p. 94.
[239] Northrup, 1998, p. 259.
[240] Ayalon, 1977, pp. 91, 100.
[241] Ibid., p. 101.
[242] See Jackson, JRAS, 1990, pp. 340-358.

Sultanates must have benefited them especially against the Mongols. However, both groups in the respective empires were also treated very harshly because they had been part of the Mongol Empire that threatened the survival of the Mamluks and the Delhi Sultanate.

To recapitulate, the Muslim authors of the Delhi Sultanate highlight the military skills of the neo-Muslims who are described as expert archers and excellent commanders which make them characteristically Mongol. There are also some conflicting views offered by Barni who shows distrust of the Mongols while at the same time mentioning their utmost loyalty to Jalal al-Din Khalji. In Ala al-Din's reign there is less of this dichotomy for they have been depicted overwhelmingly as disloyal and untrustworthy by nearly all the chroniclers (Amir Khusrau, Barni and Firishta). This is of course not surprising since the neo-Muslims threatened Ala al-Din with their involvement in the usurpation of the throne. Their being Mongol at least superficially may have linked them to the Central Asian Mongols making their position highly precarious in the Delhi Sultanate. Similarly in the Mamluk Empire Baybars I encouraged and welcomed them but there was also a fair degree of resentment against the Wafidiya among the freemen.[243] The term '*Wafidi'* was often used as a form of insult among Mamluk amirs. Kitbugha's reign heightened the threat not only because he was Mongol himself but he was also building a Mongol support base by bringing numerous Oirats into the Mamluk Empire.[244] The more control they exercised, the easier it became for their opponents to dislodge them from court in both the Mamluk and the Delhi Sultanate.

While, the migration into and treatment of the Mongols in the Slave Dynasties of the east and west have a lot in common there are some other factors that need to be considered as well. The case of their rebellion and involvement in a plot to remove Sultan Lajin in favour of Kitbugha, a fellow Mongol, is implicit. The neo-Muslims, however, present a more mixed situation. They did not support another Mongol leader against the Sultans but rather involved themselves with Sultanate leaders. Eventually, when their candidate (for instance, Arkaly Khan, son of Jalal al-Din Khalji) did not manage to procure the throne they allied with another enemy of Ala al-Din, the Rajput

[243] Ayalon, 1977, pp. 100-101.
[244] Ibid., p. 93.

kings. The case of the neo-Muslim Mongols in the Delhi Sultanate and their alliance with Rajput kings - Kanhadadeva of Jalor and Hammir Deva of Ranthambhore, against Ala al-Din Khalji presents interesting insights into the role of the Mongols in Hindustan which has hitherto been thought to be quite limited.

Luckily, the Rajput sources shed more light on the neo-Muslims, especially the characteristics of Muhammad Shah. It is not surprising that Rajput sources contain information relating to the resistance that the Delhi Sultanate faced in Hindustan. The conflict between the Rajputs and the Delhi Sultanate came to a head under Ala al-Din Khalji and resulted in the fall of Ranthambhor and the Rajputs. We have information from Hindu-Jain scholars who wrote about Hammir Deva. Bhandau Vyas Virchit's *Hammiryana,* which follows Nyaychandra Suri's *Hammir Mahakavya*, elaborates on the person and character of Muhammad Shah extensively. According to the Bhandau, Muhammad Shah was a brave warrior, loyal to his last breath and a great marksman. Bhandau extols both his Muslim and Mongol attributes. For instance, he refers to Muhammad Shah as Mir Mahimashah Mughal when he introduces him to Hammir Deva.[245]

Both Nyaychandra Suri and Bhandau vouch for his being a *good Muslim*. We are told that Muhammad Shah prayed five times a day, never ate hot food, and never sat idly and in various couplets asks *Allah* to guide him.[246] While at the same time highlighting his Mongol attributes, Muhammad Shah is depicted as being such an expert marksman that he is denied permission from Hammir to shoot at Ala al-Din or Ulugh Khan from within the fort for fear of initiating the first battle. Nonetheless Muhammad Shah proves himself by killing his nephew, Udansi, who is in the service of Ala al-Din, with only one shot.[247] The authors though they ostensibly praise the person of Hammir place Muhammad Shah almost on the same pedestal in their description of his bravery and loyalty. Muhammad Shah's gallant performance in the army of Hammir Deva against the Delhi Sultanate army is replete with details. The first attack was undertaken by Ulugh Khan against Ranthambhor which was thwarted by Hammir's army and included the neo-Muslims Muhammad Shah, Yalchaq,

[245] Khema, 1999, 104.
[246] Ibid., p. 97.
[247] Ibid., p. 164.

Kamru, along with the Hindu commanders Bhimsingh and Jaja Deva. And, we find Muhammad Shah and his brothers with Hammir Deva on the battlefield in the last effort to save Ranthambhor as well. Both Hammir Deva's death and Muhammad Shah's death is described with as much detail.[248]

Nyaychandra and Virchit stress the master-client relationship between Hammir and Muhammad Shah. Muhammad Shah continues to repay the debt of Hammir's protection and at one point gets upset with Hammir for calling them '*videshi'* or foreigner. In the epic poem Muhammad Shah proves his loyalty shown to Hammir by killing his own and his brothers' families by extracting any motivations for not being able to fight till the finish. This is in contradiction to Barni's more reliable account in which the neo-Muslim families were in Delhi and were imprisoned and tortured by Ala al-Din and Nusrat Khan but does not take away from the description of loyalty shown by Muhammad Shah.[249] Interestingly the authors also choose to blame the fall of Ranthambhor on a Hindu traitor[250] while at the same time praising the loyalty of a (Mongol) Muslim, Muhammad Shah.[251]

In the description of the battle itself, Amir Khusrau confirms that Hammir committed *jauhar* rather than be captured by the Muslim army.[252] Muhammad Shah leads one of the last charges and continues fighting and stays defiant even when he lies wounded and Ala al-Din Khalji offers him protection if he will change his allegiance and support Ala al-Din.[253] After Muhammad Shah and his brothers Mir Ghabru (Kamru) and Bijli Khan are killed, Jaja Deva and his soldiers enter the battlefield and hold the fort for another two days. Again, it is striking that Muhammad Shah is the epitome of loyalty in his service to Hammir Deva, blurring the lines between being a rebel in the eyes of the Muslim chroniclers and a refugee who proves faithful to his last breath in the pages of the Rajputs epics. While what is an even more remarkable aspect is that both Hammir's brother and disgruntled minister, Hindus, prove to be disloyal and defect to the Delhi Sultanate. It is befitting to reiterate again the language of the Rajput conflict with the Delhi Sultanate which was explicitly expressed as Hindu-

[248] Srivastava, 1981, pp.80-82.
[249] Candra, 2003, pp. 119, 70.
[250] Ahmad, 2003, p. 474.
[251] Khema, 1999, p. 182.
[252] Khusrau, 1953 pp. 41-42.
[253] Khema, 1999, p. 188.

Muslim rivalry. The non-Muslim poets also echo the sentiments of this ongoing *Hindu* resistance and yet when it came to writing about one of the most famous bulwarks of Rajput resistance, his companions were *Muslims*, Muslim-Mongols.

The alliance between Hindu Rajputs and Muslim Mongols requires yet further analysis. According to Sharma, the neo-Muslims "…were bound to the throne of Delhi neither by hereditary loyalty nor hereditary religion."[254] It is evident from the discussion so far that the perception of the neo-Muslims was predominantly focused on the aspect of them being Mongol rather than Muslim. The interaction between the Rajputs (Hindus) and the neo-Muslim Mongols also points to a scenario where their being Muslim was secondary to their being Mongol at least in terms of the Muslim threat that Ala al-Din represented. This is evident from this alliance and in the case of Hammir Deva ended up destroying Ranthambhor. It sounds too simplistic to assume that the reason that Hammir Deva fought so bravely (imbued with the Rajput ideals of valour and honour) was only because he had given his word to the rebel neo-Muslim leaders.

Perhaps the answer to Hammir's actions lies in the fact that in forging an alliance with the neo-Muslim Mongol chiefs, Hammir was allying himself with his enemy's enemy. The Rajputs in accepting the neo-Muslims in Ranthambhor gained access not only to *Mongol* militaristic skills and leadership[255] but also military intelligence of the Delhi Sultanate which as high ranking commanders and officials they would have possessed. Just as in the case of the Mamluks encouraging Mongols to defect from the Ilkhans,[256] the neo-Muslims presented themselves as a source of not only Mongol military skills but also information of Ala al-Din's army which had potential benefits for the Rajputs.

Historians also refer to the severity of the treatment meted out to the rebellious neo-Muslims at the hands of Ala al-Din and then separately talk about the wholesale destruction of the fort of Ranthambhor to emphasise his harsh personality. However, not only were the Mongols – and I am deliberately using the term Mongol and not

[254] Sharma, 1975, p. 182.
[255] Khusrau, 1975, p. 18.
[256] Amitai, 1995, p. 71.

neo-Muslim - rebelling as part of the Khalji army but being Mongol were also inadvertently linked to the biggest external threat to Ala al-Din's survival, in which case his severe policies against them make much more sense. This was not a novel situation as has been seen in the earlier massacre of neo-Muslims under Kayqubad who present a very concrete example of how the neo-Muslims within the Delhi Sultanate were susceptible to being easily accused of undermining their adopted state vis-à-vis Mongol threats from the outside. Additionally, the neo-Muslim Mongols supporting the Rajputs, a formidable threat, necessitated a strong response by the new Sultan who was consolidating his Empire. Significantly, the battle between the Hindu-Rajputs and the Muslim-Delhi Sultanate did not end with the fall of the fort of Ranthambhor but rather began with this momentous battle that included the Mongols that resided in Hindustan. As has been mentioned already Ala al-Din Khalji went on to garner submission from nearly all the Rajput kingdoms of Hindustan.

It is interesting to note that the Sultans of Delhi seem to ignore the Muslim aspect of the neo-Muslims as do the Hindu rulers in Rajasthan who seem to view the neo-Muslim Mongols more as Mongol rather than Muslim since they allied with Muslim-Mongols in their fight against the Muslim-Sultanate. As is evident from the Sanskrit sources discussed already, it is not that their religion was a marginalised aspect of their identity, but rather, that it did not play a significant role in either upholding the Rajput ideal of protection of asylum seekers or forging an alliance which increased their chances of resisting the Delhi Sultanate. The reciprocal loyalty that has been described in such detail on the part of the Muslim-Mongols to their Rajput overlords is yet another aspect of their Mongol identity which can be traced back to Chinggis Khan's centralisation policies on the Steppe. Additionally, Muslim historians of the Delhi Sultanate and historians of the Rajputs talk about the neo-Muslims in similar tones allowing speculation for the possibility that the perception of these neo-Muslims represented a more comprehensively *Hindustani* opinion which stresses their continued perception as *Mongol*.

The notion of Mongol identity thus far discussed in terms of Muslim and Hindu perceptions in Hindustan includes another dimension, self perception of the neo-Muslim Mongols. In the description of the neo-Muslims' actions in Hindustan it is interesting to note that they were intensely loyal to the leaders that gave them refuge,

whether it was Balban, Kayqubad, Jalal al-Din Khalji or eventually Hammir Deva. This idea is very reminiscent of Chinggis Khan himself who in setting up a centralised Mongol Empire changed the notion of loyalty on the Steppe from a product of kinship to that of voluntary association with a leader based on his individual charisma and not on traditional tribal loyalty.[257] This raises the point of the neo-Muslims' own sense of identity which harks back to the beginning of the formation of the Mongol Empire and invokes their Mongolness. The neo-Muslims from Balban's reign supported Balban's descendants, in the same way that the neo-Muslims showed loyalty to Jalal al-Din's descendants against Ala al-Din and finally the depiction of a wounded Muhammad Shah who tells Ala al-Din that his loyalty lay with Hammir's son and that he wouldn't change allegiances even to save his own life. These illustrations show clearly that there was a sense of a code of conduct that the neo-Muslims were following and that their alliances were not arbitrary but involved Chinggisid principles of service.

It is evident from the above discussion that their 'Mongol-ness' stuck with them and played an important role in how the inhabitants of the Mamluk and Delhi Sultanate treated them over the next few decades. Furthermore, the discussion of the identity of the neo-Muslims and the perception of this group as quite evidently Mongol allows the case of Mongol dominance in the Delhi court to be fleshed out. The historians of Hindustan viewed these neo-Muslims as Mongols and these Mongols were intimately involved with attempts to install candidates to the throne of the Delhi Sultanate. As already discussed, they occupied high positions in the nobility and exercised a fair degree of control in the Delhi Sultanate. While Kayqubad proved to be a successful candidate to the Delhi throne, the Mongols succumbed to accusations of affiliation with the external Mongol threat. The second group of neo-Muslims tried and failed to enthrone their candidate on several occasions and eventually had to escape to the most powerful Rajput kingdom, where they failed once again. Nonetheless despite their failures they remained involved in rebellions against Ala al-Din which ultimately led to their wholesale massacre in 1311. With that it seems that the neo-Muslims were either all wiped out as is reported by Barni, or at least that most of them suffered to

[257] Togan, 1998, p. 133.

such an extent that they are not heard from again. Thus, the threat that these Mongols posed was also successfully put down by Ala al-Din.

Conclusion

The Chaghatai invasions in the late 13th century were in many ways a culmination of the final thrust to continue expansion by the Chinggisids. With the outbreak of the civil war in 1260 the Mongol *uluses* were becoming distinct and independent entities with even nominal control of the Great Qa'an slowly ebbing away. However, the last decade of the 13th century still boasted powerful Mongol Khans like Qaidu, Oljeitu, and Duwa. As we have seen interest in Hindustan had slowly been increasing and it reached its height at this moment in history with the Delhi Sultanate under the rule of Ala al-Din Khalji who represented Delhi's rise to power again after a period of laxity. The Mongols came dangerously close to including Hindustan as part of their empire but were stopped by the forces of Ala al-Din. Since the Mongols did not succeed in the conquest of Delhi we can only guess at the fate of Hindustan if it had fallen into the hands of the Central Asian Mongols. Looking at the different administrative policies the Mongols used to exercise control over their vast Empire we can speculate that Hindustan would have either been controlled directly by one of Duwa's sons (he sent two sons to campaign against Delhi) or it would have been run on the lines of a vassal state which had already been seen in Punjab and Kashmir under the Ilkhans.

The inability of the Chaghatai Mongols to defeat the Delhi Sultans involves the dispelling of the myth of Mongol invincibility which had already been shaken by the persistent defeats suffered by the Ilkhans at the hands of the Mamluk Sultanate. While it is an accepted fact that the Mamluks and Japan proved to stop the Mongols, Hindustan is usually left out of this discussion or appears as a side note. However, I have tried to show in this work that Hindustan proved a bulwark to Mongol expansion in the Indian subcontinent and denied expansion to the Chaghatai Mongols. There is no denying that the weaknesses of the Central Asian Mongols, the civil war in the Mongol Empire, and the death of Qaidu and then Duwa affected the Mongol successes or lack thereof in Hindustan, but not more so than the reasons cited for Ilkhan defeats in Syria.[258] A powerful army with similar or at least familiar military tactics, the advantage of being on home ground and skilful commanders like Zafar Khan, Ulugh Khan and also Ala al-Din provide a reasonably convincing picture of the

[258] See Amitai, 1995, Mongols and Mamluks.

Delhi Sultanate's military strength. The result was the reversals of the Central Asian armies year after year back to their own territories.

The second half of the 13^{th} century also saw powerful neo-Muslim (Mongol) nobles engaged in succession struggles within the Delhi court. They enjoyed high office and were close to the monarch. They exercised control through coalitions which is best illustrated in Kayqubad's rise to power. He was brought to power with the help of the neo-Muslims which is significant to express the idea of Mongol control in Delhi. The neo-Muslims failed in their bid to hold power in Kayqubad's reign and failed again when Ala al-Din was enthroned and remained in power. However, had the neo-Muslim Mongols been successful at either avoiding the machinations of Nizam al-Din, Kayqubad's minister, or under Ala al-Din succeeded in installing one of his rivals to the throne of Delhi, the fate of Hindustan would have been quite different albeit indirect Mongol control i.e. through a puppet-Sultan. Considering that the Chinggisids themselves became puppet-khans in Central Asia and in Iran in the 14^{th} century, the Delhi Sultans might have suffered the same fate. Of course, the Khalji Delhi Sultans had replaced the Turks in 1290 and in 1321 they were replaced by the Tughlaqs, so it is plausible to speculate that one of the neo-Muslim leaders could have ascended the throne in the future. At this juncture, it is interesting to bring up Muhammad Shah, the neo-Muslim Mongol leader, who cuts an impressive figure in the Rajput sources and with the stories of his bravery, valour and leadership skills it is not too hard to conjure up an image of him, perhaps with the support of the Rajputs, on the throne of the Delhi Sultanate.

The neo-Muslims could not shake off the stigma of being Mongol and thus being perceived as connected with the biggest external threat to the survival of Hindustan long enough to be able to install a puppet-Delhi Sultan or even a Mongol-Delhi Sultan. It is interesting to reintroduce here why the Mongols were welcomed in and actively sought by Balban when he became Sultan. In his desire to weaken the power of the Turkish slaves, of whom he was also one, he brought in new groups into the Delhi court and as in the case of the Mongols gave them powerful positions. That these Mongols then got involved in succession struggles after Balban's death does not seem surprising considering the Delhi Sultanate had been engulfed in succession struggles for most of its existence. While, we do not have any concrete evidence of

collusion between the Mongols in Delhi and the invading Mongol forces at any time, we do have an instance of where this was suggested as seen in the case of Kayqubad's reign and which led to the massacre of Balban's neo-Muslim Mongol nobility. The second group of neo-Muslims enjoyed a similar high status on arrival in the Delhi Sultanate. They also had access to offices in the nobility and the military but after the death of their patron, Jalal al-Din, they appear mostly as rebellious leaders of numerous bids to acquire the throne. That they failed and this group was also cruelly massacred for their involvement in these attempts point to at least two very interesting observations, one, they remained an easily identifiable group, and two, they were made easy targets because of their being Mongol. The latter argument can be made because Ala al-Din's rule is marked by a number of rebellions to remove him from the throne. Interestingly, Ala al-Din delivered the final blow to the neo-Muslims only after the Central Asian Mongols had stopped their invasions into Hindustan.

The neo-Muslims open up various avenues of discussion apart from Mongol control over the Delhi throne. The most interesting aspect of the neo-Muslims revolves around their being Muslim and Mongol at the same time. Being both was not a unique case of identity but with regards to how they were perceived in Hindustan by both Hindus and Muslims it is noteworthy. Both the Muslim and the non-Muslim sources tend to marginalise their Muslim identities in their own unique ways. While the Muslim sources considered them suspect in their religious faith as new converts to Islam, the Hindu sources have no problem in exemplifying them as loyal supporters of the Rajput Kings while simultaneously emphasising that the neo-Muslim leader, Muhammad Shah, prayed five times a day. It would be misleading to say that the neo-Muslims were not seen with any suspicion even in Hammir Deva's court. There are references to them being called foreigners as also questions of their loyalty considering they shared their faith with the Delhi Sultan. However, the neo-Muslims overcome that and are depicted as having imbibed some of the more glaringly Rajput ideals and they commit their families to *jauhar* to convince Hammir of severing all earthly ties to prove their determination to fight Ala al-Din. Not only does Suri highlight the aspects of their Muslim identity, he makes a show of their Mongol attributes perhaps even more emphatically. Muhammad Shah is introduced as a Mughal to Hammir Deva and with his brilliant archery skills, his horsemanship and

his bravery in battle he is celebrated and honoured with almost similar fanfare as Hammir is treated.

Another aspect of the neo-Muslims is their alliance with the Rajputs against the Delhi Sultanate. This Hindu-Mongol alliance raises questions about the rivalry between the Rajputs and the Delhi Sultanate traditionally recorded as a Hindu-Muslim conflict. Since, we have Muslim and non-Muslim sources for the description of the neo-Muslims, it is interesting to make a comparison. While, Barni views the neo-Muslims as rebels, Nyaychandra Suri views them as loyal supporters who gave their life for Hammir once he gave them refuge. As a matter of fact they are depicted as even more loyal than important and high ranking Hindus, for instance, Hammir's brother and minister, who defect to Ala al-Din and lead to the fall of Ranthambhor.

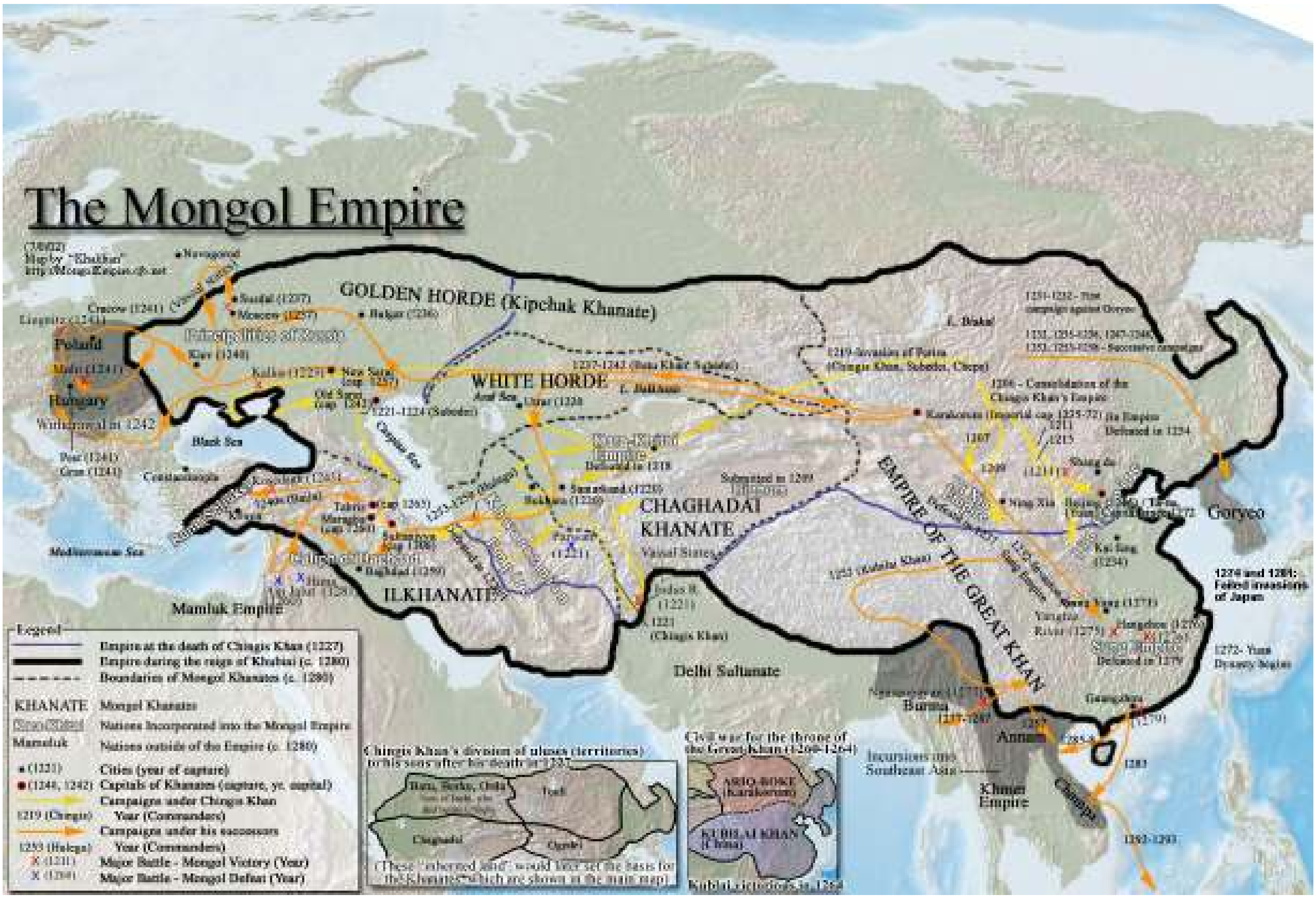
As has been seen, the notion of neo-Muslim loyalty allows us to make the connection with the founding principles of Chinggis Khan's Mongol Empire which relied on loyalty to the leader as opposed to the tribe. It also lends itself to the argument that these qualities in conjunction with their characteristically Mongol military prowess, made it easy for this group to be perceived continually as Mongol by Ala al-Din's court and in the period of intense attacks from the Central Asian Mongols, Ala al-Din had no choice but to be suspicious of these citizens who represented internal and external instability and thus deal with them accordingly.

It is evident from the discussion so far that both Mongol attempts failed and Hindustan remained, at times firmly and at other times teetering at the edges, within the grasp of the Muslim rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. The armies of Islam, as they are referred to by the Muslim historians of the Delhi Sultanate, prevailed over the armies of the *infidel* Mongols throughout the second half of the 13th century. Ala al-Din Khalji's reign stands out as the period when Hindustan was most successful against the Mongols, specifically, the Central Asian Mongols. The Central Asian Mongols, both the Chaghatais and the Ogedeis had been the most marginalised *uluses* and were only beginning to flex their muscles in the 1270s. While, Qaidu was interested in the Mongol seat of power and the Ilkhan territories, Duwa seemed to focus on Afghanistan and Hindustan. The armies of Duwa occupied Ghazna in the 1290s and invaded Sind and Hind nearly every year and returned each time suffering losses, only

to return again and again until Duwa died in 1307. It seems very likely that Duwa was the driving force behind the intensification of the conquest of Hindustan which is also evident from the account of Duwa's peace embassy in which he laid claims over Afghanistan, Sind and Hind in addition to Central Asia, as inherited from Chinggis Khan. His calls to a return to the policy of expansion meant that the unconquered lands to the south were his for the taking and that he wanted to establish that the Yuan and the Ilkhans would not interfere with his interests. However, Duwa was faced with Ala al-Din Khalji, a formidable opponent, and was not able to claim the territory of Hind as part of his domains. Ala al-Din's armies successfully stopped the advance of the Mongols into the subcontinent and for a brief period the Delhi Sultanate was not attacked by the Central Asian Mongols at all.

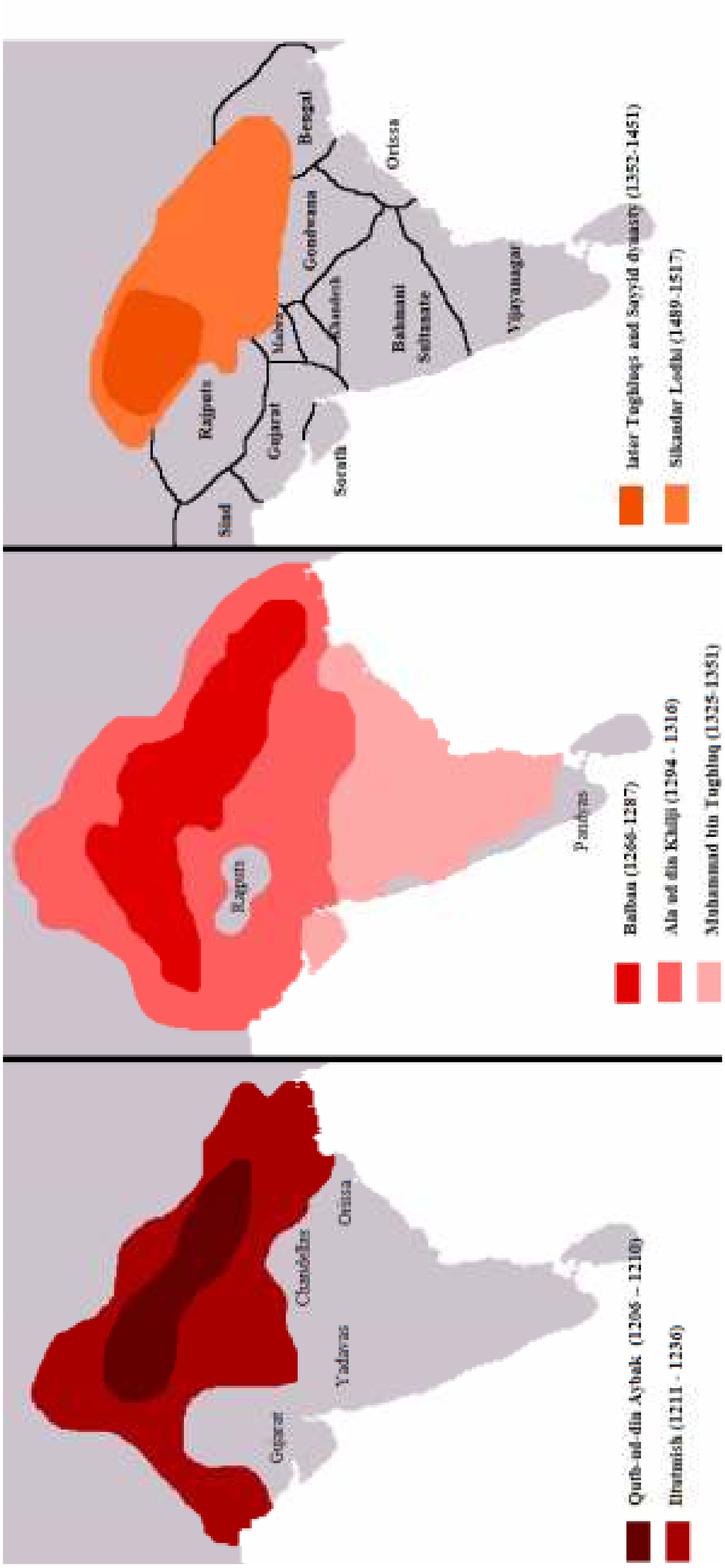
Hindustan's exclusion from the Mongol Empire did not signify a lack of either interest or contact between the two in the 13th-14th centuries. It is impossible to view the Delhi Sultanate without taking into account its mighty neighbour. Conversely, when studying the Central Asian Mongols, in particular, it is difficult to ignore the Delhi Sultanate which challenged the notion of a Mongol imperial ideology or for that matter Mongol manifest destiny.[259] Similarly, in order to study the Delhi Sultanate and the nobility that was in control of it, the neo-Muslim Mongols who enjoyed high status and positions within the Sultanate cannot be ignored or marginalised not only because they came within a hairs breadth of exercising control on the Delhi throne but also because they provided an alliance between Hindus and Muslims in Hindustan, possibly even a precursor to the memorable alliance between the Rajputs and the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the 16th century. The Rajputs who were the internal rivals of the Delhi Sultanate cannot be sidelined in any discussion and in their short-lived alliance with the neo-Muslims formed a significant and complex internal challenge for the Delhi Sultanate. It is significant that the Delhi Sultanate thwarted attempts of their external enemies, the Chinggissid Mongols and their internal enemies, the neo-Muslims and the Rajputs, and retained control and ruled Northern Hindustan for another century.

[259] Amitai, 1995, p. 233.



Map 1: Mongol Empire[260]

[260] Web source. 16 January 2007. <http://www.allempires.com/empires/mongol/mongolempire_map.jpg>. 29 August 2008.



Map 2: Delhi Sultanate[261]

[261] Web Source. 28 January 2008. <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Delhi_History_Map.png&limit=20#filehistory>. 29 August 2008

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